

GRAND STRAND WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JULY 28, 2025

	#MEETINGS (Since 7/1/25)	#ATTENDED (Since 7/1/25)	% ATTENDANCE
MEMBERS PRESENT:			
Benjy A. Hardee, Chairman	1	1	100%
Arnold T. Johnson, Vice Chairman	1	1	100%
Sidney F. Thompson, Member	1	1	100%
J. Liston Wells, Member	1	1	100%
Wilbur M. James, Member	1	1	100%
Mark K. Lazarus, Member	1	1	100%
L. Morgan Martin, Member	1	1	100%
MEMBERS ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE:			
Radha B. Herring, Member	1	1	100%
MEMBERS ABSENT:			
Richard Singleton II, Secretary	1	0	0%

STAFF PRESENT:  
Christy Holder, Chief Executive Officer  
Chrystal Skipper, Chief of Administration  
Neeraj Patel, Chief of Plant Operations  
Matthew Minor, Chief of Engineering & Construction  
Thomas Neat, Chief of Technology  
Wade Lewis, Chief of Field Operations  
Greg Thompson, Chief of Accounting & Finance  
Mary Hunsucker, HR Manager

LEGAL COUNSEL:  
Bhumi Patel, Burr Forman

VISITORS:  
Sandy Davis, Myrtle Beach Regional EDC  
Mike Hagg, Myrtle Beach Regional EDC  
Gregg Smith, Myrtle Beach Regional EDC  
Casey Jones, Waccamaw Publishers

Copies of the Notice of Meeting and Agenda were mailed to the local media.

Chairman Hardee called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The invocation was given by Board Member, Wilbur James.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 23, 2025 MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. James, the Minutes of the June 23, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

PRESENTATION BY MYRTLE BEACH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: Mrs. Sandy Davis with the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation (MBREDC) provided the Board with an update on the Bucksport Marine Park. Since last year, Mrs. Holder and the MBREDC have had several meetings for potential projects. Last September, they met with Project Windmill but this project is no longer active. They also met with Project Deck who presented to the Board previously and plans to present a proposal to the Board again next month. Project C, a start-up, visited in March 2025 but currently there are no incentives for start-ups. Project Cool is interested in the Marine Park as well as the campground and marina, but they are not ready to present a proposal at this time. Mrs. Davis hopes to have something from them soon. Mr. Lazarus sent a contact to the MBREDC and that contact requested more

information but has not been responsive recently. This is a total of 5 projects that have visited the site in the last year.

Mrs. Davis stated the MBREDC also attended the Miami Boat Show this year and met with 13 companies while they were there. Natasha Hanna, Vice Chairman of the MBREDC Board, attended the Fort Lauderdale boat show and met with 6 companies. They followed up with all of these companies recently, but their interest has dropped recently due to the tariffs. The MBREDC will continue to follow up with these companies quarterly.

The MBREDC also met with about 20 different site selectors. Site selectors work with individual companies to be able to locate the best area for the company. The MBREDC showcased the Bucksport Marine Park when meeting with these site selectors.

On February 25, 2025, the MBREDC had a call with a company who was unable to meet at the Fort Lauderdale boat show but is interested in the Marine Park. This company is about two years out from making a decision, but they do plan to expand to South Carolina, North Carolina or Georgia.

On April 17, 2025, the South Carolina Department of Commerce brought three of their new project managers to Horry County to see what Horry County had to offer. These project managers had never visited Horry County and were able to visit the Marine Park while they were here.

In May, the MBREDC hosted six site selectors and they were all provided information on the Bucksport Marine Park.

On July 14, 2025, the South Carolina Department of Commerce allowed the MBREDC to have a luncheon at the Department of Commerce.

Mrs. Davis stated the MBREDC has also been advertising in magazines, and they have new drone footage of the site, which is all on the website, digital advertising, etc. to promote the Bucksport Marine Park. They also have plans to attend upcoming boat shows in Florida.

Mrs. Davis also briefly talked to the Board about the process of becoming a Palmetto Site. The MBREDC can have the due diligence completed on a public park including updated Phase One, Phase Two and due diligence to have it site ready at no charge. The Marine Park would then be listed on the Department of Commerce's website as a Palmetto Site meaning the site is ready to build on. The process would also include a boundary survey and title work. This is done every five years. Mrs. Davis briefly discussed this further with Board and welcomed questions from the Board.

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT – OLD AND NEW BUSINESS (ACTION ITEMS):

DISCUSSION/ACTION: Capital Budget Appropriation Requests – Rural Water and Sewer Projects. Mrs. Holder stated the projects in the Board packet for appropriation have met the criteria for our rural program. Upon motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. James, the capital budget appropriation requests for rural water and sewer projects were unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

Mrs. Holder called the Board's attention to the July CEO Report for the Board's information.

#### DIVISION REPORTS:

##### GREG THOMPSON, CHIEF OF ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

UPDATE/STATUS: June 2025 Financial Statements: Mr. Thompson shared several charts with information regarding the fiscal year 2025 financials with the Board. In regards to the Income Statement, operating revenues are up \$8.1 million compared to

fiscal year 2024. We did not have a rate increase last year so the increase in operating revenues is due to an increase in our customer base in fiscal year 2025. Over the last five years, we have added a total of 36,000 new customers. In regards to expenses, fiscal year 2025 expenses are up \$6.6 million from fiscal year 2024. The increase spanned across all categories. Non-operating revenues grew by \$16.1 million compared from fiscal year 2024. The increase was driven by a \$10.4 million increase in Special Fees and Contributions. Mr. Thompson shared several graphs with the Board to illustrate the different categories that make up operating revenues, operating expenses and non-operating revenues. Mr. Thompson also shared the fiscal year 2025 budget to actual numbers with the Board. Operating revenues were right on target and just slightly above the budgeted amount. Non-operating revenues were significantly higher than budgeted. Actual expenses were 15% lower than total budgeted expenses.

UPDATE/STATUS: Investment Analysis: Mr. Thompson called the Board's attention to the Investment Portfolio in the Board packet. Overall, we have \$252.2 million in cash and investments. We earned 5.36% for the year. Mr. Thompson shared the fiscal year-to-date investment returns for several accounts with the Board. The returns from our investment managers, PNC and PFM, show strong performance this year compared to last year.

Mr. Thompson also shared a chart with the Board showing the total cash and investments compared to debt for the past 8 years. In 2018, total debt was roughly \$50 million more than total cash and investments. In 2023, these were almost even and in 2025 our total cash and investments is roughly \$50 million more than total debt.

UPDATE/STATUS: Purchase Transactions Over \$3,500: Mr. Thompson called the Board's attention to the list of purchase orders over \$3,500 in the Board packet totaling \$3.5 million for the month of June.

UPDATE/STATUS: Business & Travel Expenses: Mr. Thompson stated that year-to-date, we have spent a total of \$334,879 on business and travel expenses.

Mr. Thompson stated we are in the process of interviewing and selecting a vendor to conduct a rate study to help develop our 20-year financial plan to take us through 2045. The plan will map out all capital expenses and the debt needed to meet our financial needs. Mrs. Holder stated that this is the financing plan to go with the capital improvement plan presented at the recent budget retreat. The financial plan will be presented to the Board at next year's budget retreat.

Mr. Thompson stated that he was also bringing in a utility auditor to make sure we are being charged the correct rates. The auditors have also been asked to look at fuel costs and telecommunications.

The Accounting team is working hard to close out the fiscal year. The auditors will be on-site next week, and we hope to have the CAFR ready to present to the Board in September or October.

#### NEERAJ PATEL, CHIEF OF PLANT OPERATIONS

UPDATE/STATUS: Surface Water Treatment Report. In June, we treated and produced an average of 32.9 million gallons a day at Bull Creek and 22.0 million gallons a day at Myrtle Beach for a combined total of 54.9 million gallons a day. Mr. Patel called the Board's attention to the trends for the last 24 months as shown in the Board packet. In regards to the alum dosage, at Bull Creek we had an average alum dosage of 74 mg/l and at Myrtle Beach the average alum dosage was 107 mg/l. The running annual average is 78 mg/l at Bull Creek and 110 mg/l at Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Patel also shared information regarding the water quality parameters for the month of June. The average color for raw water at Bull Creek was 81 color units and at Myrtle Beach it was 206 color units.

UPDATE/STATUS: Wastewater Treatment Report. For the month of June, we treated an average daily flow of 49.1 million gallons at all of our facilities combined. Mr. Patel

shared the flow trends for all of our wastewater treatment plants for the last 10 fiscal years. The current average is 43.7 million gallons a day.

UPDATE/STATUS: Compliance with SCDES Water/Wastewater Requirements & Project Status Update. Mr. Patel stated all monitoring was reported and all system operations were conducted in compliance with SCDES requirements for the month of June.

On the project status side, at the Bull Creek SWTP, construction for the 15 MGD expansion continues. In addition, Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) and our staff are working on a tracer study with the clearwell addition. Two months ago, we placed the clearwell online which added 2.5 million gallons of storage capacity at Bull Creek. The tracer study will help determine the contact time for chlorine.

On the wastewater side, at the Schwartz WWTP, the electrical and control system installation is underway for the digester blowers. At the Myrtle Beach WWTP, sitework and construction of the retaining wall continue for the odor control system. At the Bucksport WWTP, design work continues for the pipeline and Bull Creek discharge. This line will carry effluent from the RIBS further down south into Bull Creek.

#### WADE LEWIS, CHIEF OF FIELD OPERATIONS

UPDATE/STATUS: Compliance with SCDES Water/Wastewater Requirements: Mr. Lewis stated all monitoring was reported and all system operations were conducted in compliance with SCDES requirements for the month of June with the following exception.

However, on Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, a pipeline failure led to a sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) in the Garden City community. This was caused by corrosion on an 8" sewer force main located along Atlantic Avenue. Approximately 9,000 gallons of wastewater was released into Main Creek. Per state regulations, SCDES was notified and a public notice was issued to the local media outlets. GSWSA personnel obtained water samples from Main Creek at the SSO location as well as from sites upstream and downstream. The initial samples were tested for E.coli bacteria and were in the normal range. No additional sampling was required. Mr. Lewis shared a map of the location where the SSO occurred and briefly discussed the repair efforts with the Board.

UPDATE/STATUS: Aquifer Storage Recovery Well Program: In regards to the Jackson Bluff well, the contractor has started on the wellhouse roof. At the River Oaks well, the contractor has finished painting the wellhouse. In regards to the existing TPI well, Professional Pump, Inc. is scheduled to pull the well pump due to a pump failure.

In the ASR program, for the month of June, we had a net recovery of approximately 179.6 million gallons for an average daily recovery of 6.0 million gallons.

UPDATE/STATUS: Field Operations Activities: In regards to other field operations activities, in June, we smoke tested 427,784 linear feet of gravity sewer line, cleaned and televised almost 4,000 linear feet of gravity sewer, responded to 158 sewer backups and 58 water quality requests, collected 397 water quality samples, inspected 346 cross connection devices, tested and inspected 211 fire hydrants and 704 isolation valves, responded to 20 emergency main line shut-downs, completed 7 scheduled shutdowns and completed 6,317 work orders primarily for meter reading services.

#### MATT MINOR, CHIEF OF ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION

UPDATE/STATUS: Rural Water and Sewer Projects: Mr. Minor called the Board's attention to the rural water and sewer projects in the Board packet. In the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget, the Board has approved over \$5.8 million in the rural water program. In the FY 2026/2027 budget, the Board has approved over \$131,000 in the rural water program. Since the last Board meeting, we authorized 4 projects for design for 8,740 linear feet of pipeline and 27 new REUs. Three projects moved from the design phase to

construction for 2,865 linear feet of pipeline and 3 REUs. We issued service authorization to one project for 540 linear feet of pipeline and one new REU.

On the sewer side, in the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget, the Board has approved over \$7.8 million in the rural sewer program. In FY 2026/2027, the Board has approved over \$1.5 million in the rural sewer program. Since the last Board meeting, we authorized 3 new projects for design that will add 2,750 linear feet of pipeline and 3 new REUs. Six projects moved from the design phase to construction for 26,471 linear feet of pipeline and 103 REUs. We issued service authorization to 7 projects for 12,024 linear feet of pipeline and 27 new REUs.

Currently, there are 101 active rural projects in design and 24 projects in construction that will add a total of 49 miles of pipeline and 926 new REUs.

Mr. Minor called the Board's attention to the chart in the Board packet showing the cumulative miles of pipeline installed since the beginning of the rural program. To-date, in calendar year 2025, we have installed 22 miles of pipeline which includes 8 miles of waterline and 14 miles of sewer pipeline.

UPDATE/STATUS: Developer Projects: Mr. Minor shared a map with the Board showing the locations of the developer projects that were reviewed in the month of June. In June, we received 21 new letters of intent. Eleven of these projects were developer extension projects totaling 943 REUs. The other 10 projects were single-service commercial projects totaling 53 REUs. We issued service authorization to 12 projects for 639 REUs which accounted for just over \$7.8 million in developer contributions. We held 6 preconstruction meetings in June.

Overall, we have a total of 258 active developer projects in the varying statuses. Mr. Minor called the Board's attention to the list of projects in the Board packet.

Mr. Minor also called the Board's attention to the trend charts in the Board packet.

UPDATE/STATUS: Capital Projects: In regards to the Conway to Bucksport WWTP Flow Diversion project, R.H. Moore Company, Inc. (R.H. Moore) has completed the installation of all pipeline except for a directional drill at Pitch Landing Road. The drill was originally intended to be a bore and jack but this has been revised to a directional drill. The subcontractor performing the directional drill is expected to remobilize in July to complete the final portion.

In regards to the Conway Parallel 24" Water Transmission Upgrade project, we continue to conduct progress meetings with GMC. The alignment has been finalized and exhibits are being produced to begin the easement acquisition process. GMC is also preparing final plans in preparation to submit to permitting agencies. This project includes approximately 60,000 linear feet of 24" waterline from the Bull Creek SWTP to the Conway Reservoir.

In regards to the Highway 701 Widening (N of Conway), we are in contract for this project so the prime contractor will provide the water and sewer relocations for utilities within our service area. The SCDOT bid opening will be held on August 12<sup>th</sup>. As part of this project, we are replacing the existing 10" waterline with a 24" waterline. The City of Conway will also be upsizing the waterline to 24" within their portion of the service area.

In regards to the Highway 90 to Highway 905 Water Hydraulic Improvement project, our engineering consultant, Bolton & Menk, continues the design of the 16" water hydraulic improvement project. Plans are nearly 50% complete. Once a 60% plan set is ready, we will conduct an internal review of the design.

In regards to the Surfside drainage improvements project, we have completed the final relocation work associated with the drainage improvement project. The Town of Surfside's contractor, Atlas Construction of SC, Inc., can now complete the final tie-in of the drainage system as part of the project.

In regards to the SCDOT bridge replacements, we recently received notice to begin utility coordination of three separate bridge replacement projects located in our service area. These sites include the Old Reaves Ferry Bridge over Stanley Creek, the Highway 65 Bridge over Maple Swamp and the Highway 134 Bridge over Jenkins Swamp. We will begin the coordination and design process once a schedule is received.

CHRYSTAL SKIPPER, CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

UPDATE/STATUS: Customer/REU Monthly Report: Mrs. Skipper shared several graphs with the Board showing the customer and REU data for fiscal year 2025. We ended the fiscal year with 147,205 customers. Our customer base increased by 5,823 customers or 4.1%. For the month of June, our customer base increased by 509 customers. In regards to the breakdown of changes, in the month of June, our active accounts increased by 548, inactive accounts decreased by 17 and our suspended accounts decreased by 22 for a net change of 509 customers.

In regards to REUs, we ended the fiscal year with 216,042 REUs. We had a total increase of 7,789 REUs or 3.7%. During the month of June, our REUs increased by 826 REUs. In June, our active REUs increased by 1,004, inactive REUs decreased by 154 and our suspended REUs decreased by 24 for a net increase of 826 REUs.

UPDATE/STATUS: Human Resources Update: Mrs. Skipper shared information regarding personnel changes that took place during fiscal year 2025 with the Board. We ended the fiscal year 2025 with 374 employees. For the entire fiscal year, we averaged 383 employees. Over the course of the year, we had a total of 138 job postings, hired 54 new employees externally, and 76 employees were selected for internal job postings. We had 52 employees leave GSWSA, which included 28 resignations, 9 retirements and 15 terminations.

THOMAS NEAT, CHIEF OF TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Neat did not have any updates for the Board this month.

OTHER BUSINESS:


Chairman Hardee called the Board's attention to the Employee Recognition, Sod Donation Report and upcoming WEFTEC Conference in Chicago, IL from September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>.


Mr. James stated that this would be his last meeting as a Board Member. Mr. James stated he had served for 18 years and enjoyed every minute of it but due to his health and age he was not seeking reappointment.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried the Board went into executive session for the discussion of legal and contractual matters. Following executive session, the Board returned to regular session.

There being no further business, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

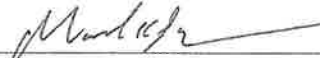
  
Benjy A. Hardee, Chairman

  
Arnold T. Johnson, Vice Chairman

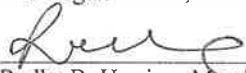
  
Richard G. Singleton II, Secretary

  
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Sidney F. Thompson, Member

*Approved via teleconference*  
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J. Liston Wells, Member

  
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Mark K. Lazarus, Member

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L. Morgan Martin, Member

  
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Radha B. Herring, Member

