

GRAND STRAND WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JUNE 23, 2025

	#MEETINGS (Since 7/1/24)	#ATTENDED (Since 7/1/24)	% ATTENDANCE
MEMBERS PRESENT:			
Sidney F. Thompson, Chairman	11	11	100%
Benjy A. Hardee, Vice Chairman	11	11	100%
Arnold T. Johnson, Secretary	11	10	91%
J. Liston Wells, Member	11	11	100%
Wilbur M. James, Member	11	11	100%
Richard Singleton II, Member	11	10	91%
Mark K. Lazarus, Member	11	8	73%
L. Morgan Martin, Member	11	7	64%

MEMBERS ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE:			
Radha B. Herring, Member	11	11	100%

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  
Mary Hunsucker, HR Manager

LEGAL COUNSEL:

Bhumi Patel, Burr Forman

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Mary Kramer, Member

VISITORS:

Greg Thompson, Future Chief of Accounting & Finance

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

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The invocation was given by Board Secretary, Arnold Johnson.

APPROVAL OF MAY 27, 2025 MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Singleton, the Minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: Resolution 01-25 – A Resolution to Raise Revenue, Make Appropriations and Adopt a Budget for Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority for Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027 and Amend Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Chairman Thompson opened the Public Hearing for comments regarding Resolution 01-25. There were no comments. The Public Hearing portion of the meeting was closed.

DISCUSSION/ADOPTION: Resolution 01-25 – A Resolution to Raise Revenue, Make Appropriations and Adopt a Budget for Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority for Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027 and Amend Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. James, the resolution was unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN, AND SECRETARY:  
Chairman Thompson stated the following officers were up for nominations for a two-year

period: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. Chairman Thompson also stated that he needed to dissolve the five-member Bucksport committee and wanted to step down as Chairman unless the Board wanted to do otherwise. Mr. Lazarus thanked Chairman Thompson for everything he has done. He has served the Board and the community well. Chairman Thompson has been on the Board for 43 years and the Board thanked him. The floor was opened for nominations. Mr. Lazarus made a motion to nominate Benjy Hardee as Chairman, Arnold Johnson as Vice Chairman and Richard Singleton as Secretary. Mr. James made a motion to close nominations which was seconded by Mr. Wells and unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

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

Mrs. Holder recognized Mary Kramer, a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, who was in attendance. Mrs. Holder presented her with a plaque to thank her for her service on the committee over the last two years. Chairman Thompson expressed his appreciation and thanked her as well.

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. Singleton, the capital budget appropriation requests for rural water and sewer projects were unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

DISCUSSION/ACTION: Slate for Appointment of Members to Citizens Advisory Committee. Upon motion of Mr. Singleton, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the slate was unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

Mrs. Holder introduced Greg Thompson, the new Chief of Accounting & Finance, to the Board. Mr. Greg Thompson is a graduate of Socastee High School, The University of South Carolina and Coastal Carolina University. He comes to us from Coastal Carolina University where he was the Associate Vice President of Finance and Controller. His official start date is July 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Greg Thompson stated that GSWSA has a phenomenal reputation in the community, and he is thrilled to be a part of the company. He stated that he would like to reach out to each Board Member individually to gain their perspective on the company and ensure that his team provides all the information needed to help the Board make decisions.

#### DIVISION REPORTS: ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

UPDATE/STATUS: May 2025 Financial Statements: Mrs. Holder stated the financial statements were in the Board packet for the Board's information. The budget is looking very strong. As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, total operating revenues were \$131.3 million which is up \$9.4 million from the same period last year. Total operating expenses are \$110.9 million which is up \$7.1 million from the same period last year. Our current operating surplus is \$20.4 million. Total non-operating revenues are \$52.1 which is up \$15.5 million from last year. The majority of the increase comes from special fees and contributions due to grants and FEMA funds we received this year.

Mrs. Holder shared the consolidated budget to actual report with the Board. As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, we have earned 92% of total budgeted revenues and spent 78% of total budgeted operating expenses. Total non-operating revenues are at 124% of budget.

UPDATE/STATUS: Mrs. Holder also called the Board's attention to the Investment Portfolio in the Board packet. Overall, we have \$130.2 million invested with managers. The funds invested by our internal staff total \$117.3 million. Our total investment portfolio is \$259.8 million with a current month yield of (0.07%), a three month yield of 0.98% and a twelve month yield of 5.11%.

UPDATE/STATUS: Business & Travel Expenses: Mrs. Holder stated that year-to-date, we have spent a total of \$306,762 on business and travel expenses.

UPDATE/STATUS: Purchase Transactions Over \$3,500: Mrs. Holder called the Board's attention to the list of purchase orders over \$3,500 in the Board packet.

NEERAJ PATEL, CHIEF OF PLANT OPERATIONS

UPDATE/STATUS: Surface Water Treatment Report. In May, we treated and produced an average of 31.1 million gallons a day at Bull Creek and 19.0 million gallons a day at Myrtle Beach for a combined total of 50.1 million gallons a day. Mr. Patel called the Board's attention to the trends for the last 24 months shown in the Board packet. In regards to the alum dosage, at Bull Creek we had an average alum dosage of 62 mg/l and at Myrtle Beach the average alum dosage was 76 mg/l. The running annual average is 76 mg/l at Bull Creek and 107 mg/l at Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Patel also shared information regarding the water quality parameters for the month of May. The average color for raw water at Bull Creek was 122 color units and at Myrtle Beach it was 124 color units.

UPDATE/STATUS: Wastewater Treatment Report. For the month of May, we treated an average daily flow of 43.7 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 43.2 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 May with one exception. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, a bacteriological sample was collected at the Longs WWTP for E. Coli. The sample showed 2,420 MPN/100 mL which exceeded the limit of 349 MPN/100 mL. The Longs WWTP utilizes a UV light system for disinfection. The UV system was operational at the time the sample was collected. An additional sample was collected the next day and showed 5 MPN/100 mL. We feel like this was human error. All of the information was reported to SCDES. As a preventative measure, the system was maintained and cleaned to ensure its integrity.

On the project status side, at the Bull Creek SWTP, we received the Approval to Place into Operation for the new clearwell and it is now online. This adds 2.5 million gallons of storage onsite at the plant.

On the wastewater side, at the Schwartz WWTP, the blower system pads are under construction. At the Myrtle Beach WWTP, sitework and construction of the retaining wall have been initiated for the treatment system for odor control. At the Bucksport WWTP, the design work is being finalized. At the Green Sea Floyds WWTP, the equipment selection is underway.

Mr. Patel briefly updated the Board regarding PFAS which was discussed at the Budget Retreat. There are many different studies available. Originally in April 2024, the EPA established the maximum contaminant level (MCL) at 4 parts per trillion (ppt) for each PFOA and PFOS and 10 ppt for four other chemicals. The initial monitoring was going to start in 2027 and the deadline for full compliance was April 2029. In May of this year, the EPA announced a revision. The regulation is now on two chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, with an MCL of 4 ppt each. This deadline for full compliance is now April 2031.

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 May.

UPDATE/STATUS: Aquifer Storage Recovery Well Program: In regards to the Jackson Bluff well, the contractor has started construction of the wellhouse. At the River Oaks well, the contractor has constructed the wellhouse. In regards to the Carolina Pines well, the well driller has been selected and the purchase order has been issued. This is the same

contractor that is working on the International Drive well. At the International Drive well, the well driller is in the process of well development.

In the ASR program, for the month of May, we had a net recovery of approximately 298.5 million gallons for an average daily recovery of 9.6 million gallons.

**UPDATE/STATUS: Field Operations Activities:** In regards to other field operations activities, in May, we smoke tested 398,266 linear feet of gravity sewer line, cleaned and televised 5,980 linear feet of gravity sewer mains, responded to 167 sewer backups and 27 water quality requests, collected 432 water quality samples, inspected 556 cross connection devices, tested and inspected 176 fire hydrants and 641 isolation valves, responded to 7 emergency main line shut-downs, completed 2 scheduled shutdowns and completed 7,033 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 \$5.7 million in the rural water program. Since the last Board meeting, we authorized 5 projects for design for 13,730 linear feet of pipeline and 17 new REUs. One project moved from the design phase to construction for 686 linear feet of pipeline and one REU. We issued service authorization to 6 projects for 4,879 linear feet of pipeline and 12 new REUs.

On the sewer side, in the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget, the Board has approved over \$7.7 million in the rural sewer program. Since the last Board meeting, we authorized 4 new projects for design that will add 4,645 linear feet of pipeline and 12 new REUs. Two projects moved from the design phase to construction for 2,636 linear feet of pipeline and 2 REUs. We issued service authorization to 6 projects for 5,840 linear feet of pipeline and 11 new REUs.

Currently, there are 105 active rural projects in design and 23 projects in construction that will add a total of 49 miles of pipeline and 899 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 20 miles of pipeline which includes 8 miles of waterline and 12 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 May. In May, we received 10 new letters of intent. Five of these projects were developer extension projects totaling 112 REUs. The other 5 projects were single-service commercial projects totaling 43 REUs. We issued service authorization to 10 projects for 661 REUs which accounted for just over \$6.0 million in developer contributions. We held 11 preconstruction meetings in May.

Overall, we have a total of 256 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. The number of new projects has been trending downward since February. In addition, the REUs have been trending downward lately.

**UPDATE/STATUS: Capital Projects:** In regards to the Bull Creek SWTP Expansion and Drainage project, we recently met with the engineer and the contractor to discuss drainage. Additional drainage improvements have been identified to improve the stormwater around the facility. We will be working with Horry County on a joint effort to improve stormwater conditions in Bucksport that will divert stormwater away from the Bull Creek SWTP and toward the Waccamaw River.

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 due to unforeseen conditions 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 Highway 17 Business Intersection Improvements in Garden City, the SCDOT in partnership with Horry County recently accepted bids for this RIDE 3 project that includes the utility relocation. We are in contract for this project so the prime contractor will provide the water and sewer relocations for utilities. We are currently awaiting final bid results.

In regards to the Highway 501 Widening project from Gardner Lacy Road to Highway 544, the SCDOT in partnership with Horry County recently accepted bids for this RIDE 3 project that includes the utility relocation. We are in contract for this project so the prime contractor will provide the water and sewer relocations for utilities within our service area. As part of this project, we are replacing the existing 10" waterline with a 24" waterline in our service area. The City of Conway will also be upsizing the waterline to 24" within their portion of the service area.

In regards to the Garden City Streetscape project, we are working with Horry County on this project as they finalize plans for improvements to transportation, pedestrian areas and stormwater in Garden City. These improvements will include various water and sewer relocations as well as abandoning a small waterline. Our staff is providing the necessary information to be included for the work.

In regards to the Surfside drainage improvements project, we are currently working with Bolton & Menk, Inc., the Town of Surfside and Atlas Construction of SC, Inc. to coordinate utility conflicts as part of the Town's stormwater improvement project. This is the second phase of improvements to stormwater quality and runoff in several areas of the town. As part of the project, we are confirming the water service line material as required by the Lead and Copper rule.

#### 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 June 2024 through May 2025. During the month of May, our customer base increased by 620 customers which brings our customer account total to 146,696. Over the last consecutive twelve months, our total customer base has increased by 5,880 customers or 4.2%. During the month of May, our active accounts increased by 595, inactive accounts increased by 32 and our suspended accounts decreased by 7.

In regards to REUs, during the month of May, our total REUs increased by 860, which brings our REU total to 215,216. Over the last consecutive twelve months, our total REUs have increased by 7,610 REUs or approximately 3.7%. During the month of May, our active REUs increased by 836, inactive REUs increased by 35 and our suspended REUs decreased by 11.

#### THOMAS NEAT, CHIEF OF TECHNOLOGY

UPDATE/STATUS: Technology Update. We signed the contract with Cayenta on May 30<sup>th</sup>, so we are on the road to replacing the AS400. The kickoff date is still to be determined. Several considerations for the start date include the new rate changes for July 1<sup>st</sup>, the annual financial audit, the Itron upgrade project and deciding whether to start the ERP or CIS conversion first.

Mr. Neat also updated the Board regarding several infrastructure updates. Mr. Neat shared information regarding off-site backups with the Board. He stated that the payment gateway we replaced several months ago has been stable for more than 90 days. It passed compliance and has been Visa and Mastercard certified. We have also become more

interactive with our customers. We have implemented new text updates and robo-calls with options to pay or get information.

Mr. Neat also shared several security updates with the Board.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Thompson 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>.


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

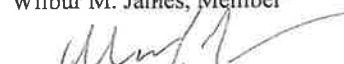
  
Arnold T. Johnson, Vice Chairman

Richard G. Singleton II, Secretary

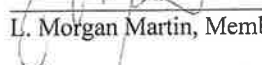
  
Sidney F. Thompson, Member

  
J. Liston Wells, Member

  
Wilbur M. James, Member

  
Mark K. Lazarus, Member

  
L. Morgan Martin, Member

  
Approved via teleconference  
Radha B. Herring, Member