

GRAND STRAND WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
 MARCH 23, 2026

	#MEETINGS (Since 7/1/25)	#ATTENDED (Since 7/1/25)	% ATTENDANCE
MEMBERS PRESENT:			
Benjy A. Hardee, Chairman	8	8	100%
Arnold T. Johnson, Vice Chairman	8	8	100%
Sidney F. Thompson, Member	8	8	100%
Mark K. Lazarus, Member	8	8	100%
L. Morgan Martin, Member	8	5	63%
Radha B. Herring, Member	8	8	100%
B. Kemp Floyd, Jr., Member	3	3	100%

MEMBERS ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE:			
Richard Singleton II, Secretary	8	7	88%
J. Liston Wells, Member	8	8	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
 Greg Thompson, Chief of Accounting & Finance
 Mary Hunsucker, HR Manager

LEGAL COUNSEL:
 Bhumi Patel, Burr Forman
 Ryan Gentry, Burr Forman

VISITORS:
 Fred Richardson, Retiree
 Dayna McGeachy, Cayenta
 Yaroslav Horiachkin, Cayenta

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 Vice Chairman, Arnold Johnson.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 23, 2026, MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Lazarus and carried, the minutes of the February 23, 2026, meeting were approved as presented.

PRESENTATION OF CAYENTA AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AT GRAND STRAND WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY BY CAYENTA. Mrs. Holder reminded the Board that we selected Cayenta as our new software platform and have entered into a contract with them. We are moving away from our legacy system to a more cloud-based and customer engagement platform. We are in the testing phase and have been working on data conversion. We are still about a year away from go-live. Tonight, Cayenta is going to provide an update as to where we are and where we are headed.

Dayna McGeachy introduced herself to the Board as the Director of PM Services. Yaroslav Horiachkin, the Senior Project Manager for the GSWSA project, was also in attendance. Cayenta is part of the Harris computer umbrella. They offer software solutions for municipalities and utilities. With 40 years of experience, they have clients across North America and in the Caribbean. They connect the technology behind the

scenes with something very visible and important – how GSWSA serves and communicates with its customers. Cayenta serves as the platform at the center of this.

Dayna posed the question, “Why does customer engagement matter for GSWSA?” The industry is growing quickly and technology is changing. Customers expect the same access and timely information that they get from their bank from their utility companies. Customers are looking for transparency and fairness.

Cayenta is going to help meet modern customer expectations by providing an online portal where customers can access their bills, payment history and usage at any time. They can start or stop service or update contact information without having to call or visit the office. The information online is drawn directly from the billing system of record. This means the customer and staff are looking at the same numbers, which reduces confusion. Because functions are cloud enabled, customers can still view and pay bills, check account status and submit requests for service even if the physical offices are closed or staffing is limited. Cayenta also supports targeted communication instead of broad communication. They can message specific customers.

Mrs. McGeachy said because Cayenta is implemented using configuration over customization, it allows Cayenta to design and improve GSWSA’s customer experience. The online portal is organized around what customers want to do. It is mobile-friendly, so it works well on the phone. Customers can help themselves, which directly reduces the number of calls. The platform behind the customer engagement portal is SilverBlaze which Mrs. McGeachy briefly explained.

Mrs. McGeachy shared a screenshot of what customers will see when they login. They are easily able to see their usage and current bill as well as other options.

In summary, Mrs. McGeachy said Cayenta gives GSWSA a modern customer experience that feels familiar and trustworthy to the community. It provides stronger communication and continuity during outages, storms or major changes. It also provides a clear, auditable record that supports GSWSA’s commitment to regulatory agencies and the public. GSWSA will be able to better use staff time and long-term cost control.

Mrs. McGeachy welcomed any questions from the Board. She also shared the timeline and where we are in the process. We are currently going into Integrated Test Cycle 1. This is our first round of testing with GSWSA data. Mrs. Holder and Mrs. McGeachy further discussed briefly.

REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE THROUGH GSWSA’S INSURANCE PROVIDER BY FRED RICHARDSON. Fred Richardson introduced himself as a retiree of GSWSA. He stated he started working at GSWSA in July of 1984 and retired in January of 2022. When he retired, he carried the group health insurance plan with him. It was his understanding that he would remain on the group health insurance plan. He felt that any fair reading of the policy at the time he retired clearly indicated that was the plan – for the retirees to stay on the group health insurance plan. Mr. Richardson stated he is 75 years old and worked here for 38 years. He believes that he earned that benefit and asked to be reinstated on the health insurance plan. Mr. Richardson stated that he appreciated the Board’s time and any consideration that may be given.

The Board thanked Mr. Richardson and took his comments under advisement. No action was taken on the matter.

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

DISCUSSION/ACTION: A Series Resolution Approving the Financing of the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion Planning and Design Engineering. Mrs. Holder stated that an amendment to the resolution was needed. The resolution called for Secretary Richard Singleton to sign the resolution. However, in Mr. Singleton’s absence tonight, we need to amend the resolution to allow Vice Chairman, Arnold Johnson to sign

the resolution. We will also need a vote on the resolution as amended. This is for the closing of the Central Wastewater Plant design.

Mr. Ryan Gentry, an attorney with Burr Forman, introduced himself and stated he was in attendance in place of Franne Heizer. Mr. Gentry called the Board's attention to the Resolution for the SRF Loan for \$1,200,603 for the design of the expansion of the Central Wastewater Plant. The first interest payment is due December 1st. There is a 7-year term for the loan with a 2.5% interest rate.

Upon motion of Mr. Singleton, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, the Board unanimously approved for Mr. Johnson to sign on behalf of Mr. Singleton.

Upon motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, the resolution was unanimously approved as amended by the Board.

DISCUSSION/ACTION: Capital Budget Appropriation Requests – Rural Water Projects. Mrs. Holder stated the rural water projects in the Board packet for appropriation have met the criteria for our rural program.

DISCUSSION/ACTION: Capital Budget Appropriation Requests – Rural Sewer Projects. Mrs. Holder stated the rural sewer projects in the Board packet for appropriation have met the criteria for our rural program.

Upon motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Floyd, the capital budget appropriation requests for rural water and sewer projects were unanimously approved by the Board as presented.

DIVISION REPORTS:

GREG THOMPSON, CHIEF OF ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

Mr. Thompson stated the normal Board report is in the Board packet for the Board's information.

Mr. Thompson stated we closed on the 2026 \$100 million bond issue over the last month, and he wanted to provide the Board with a brief overview of what was reported to the rating agencies. We met with both Moody's and S&P to get our credit ratings which we then used to go to market for bonds. We were AA+ but asked to be upgraded to AAA. We presented our service area, improving demographics, highlighted our financial metrics, which are very strong, and presented our forward-looking capital plan.

Horry County as a service area is changing rapidly and with that some of the demographics are changing as well. The median household income is increasing, and the poverty rate is declining. We are known as a tourist destination but with everyone moving here, we are seeing a change in the local economy. We are seeing an uptick in industry, the medical field, technology, etc. We highlighted that Horry County is great for small businesses.

We also presented on our customer base and our rates. We added 6,100 customers in fiscal year 2025. We have increased our customers by 35% since 2021. The largest portion was adding the retail customers from Little River. Previously, our top ten customers represented 25% of our revenue but now that is down to 14% so we are diversifying our revenue stream.

Mr. Thompson also shared graphs showing how our rates compare to other local utilities as well as other coastal utilities. We have the lowest rates compared to all utilities shown.

Mr. Thompson stated that the two of the metrics that ratings agencies are most concerned with are our debt service coverage ratio and days cash on hand. The debt service coverage ratio is how many times you can pay debt with net revenues. Since 2021, we have increased this from 2.70 to 4.03 which is impressive. Our days cash on hand

increased 51 days to 871 days. These are very strong metrics. We also shared a comparison of our ratios to other utilities with a AAA rating.

Mr. Thompson also shared the projected growth for our area as well as the 2045 water and sewer capital improvement plans which were also part of the presentation.

Mr. Thompson then shared the rating agency results with the Board. We received a Aa1 rating from Moody's. We scored very high in the things that we can control – the system side, the debt coverage and days cash on hand. However, the service area plays a role in the rating. Being along the coast does present risks but they stated that we manage those well.

S&P also confirmed our AA+ rating which is the same rating as the U.S. Government. Unemployment and the poverty ratings are slightly higher in our area than in areas with AAA ratings.

In short, we went to market on March 3rd and received 10 offers. The lowest bidder was Robert W. Baird & Co. with an interest rate of 4.24%.

With PFAS, we will likely have to go back out to market in 2028, Mr. Thompson discussed how our ratings will impact that debt issue. A change to our rating in several years could result in additional interest.

Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Holder and the Board briefly discussed our statistics and ratings further.

NEERAJ PATEL, CHIEF OF PLANT OPERATIONS

UPDATE/STATUS: Surface Water Treatment Report. In February, we treated and produced an average of 27.7 million gallons a day at Bull Creek and 14.3 million gallons a day at Myrtle Beach for a combined total of 42.0 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. Regarding the alum dosage, this month at Bull Creek we had an average alum dosage of 40 mg/l and at Myrtle Beach the average alum dosage was 67 mg/l. Our annual running averages are 70 mg/l at Bull Creek and 101 mg/l at Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Patel also shared information regarding the water quality parameters for the month of February. The average color for raw water at Bull Creek was 47 color units and at Myrtle Beach it was 118 color units.

UPDATE/STATUS: Wastewater Treatment Report. For the month of February, we treated an average daily flow of 42.1 million gallons at all facilities combined. Mr. Patel shared the flow trends for all wastewater treatment plants for the last 10 fiscal years. The current fiscal year-to-date average is 43.5 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 February.

On the project status side, at the Bull Creek SWTP, construction for the 15 MGD expansion continues. There are three pump upgrades associated with the project, and we have replaced the first raw water pump. In regard to the Myrtle Beach SWTP, maintenance for the intake screen has been completed.

On the wastewater side, in regard to the Vereen WWTP clarifier, we have initiated the 60% plan review.

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 February.

UPDATE/STATUS: Aquifer Storage Recovery Well Program: In regard to the Jackson Bluff and River Oaks wells, we are in the cycle testing phase. In regard to the International well, the permit to construct well building has been issued by SCDES. In regard to the Carolina Pines well, the contractor is drilling the well. In regard to the East Cox Ferry and Longs wells, the permit to construct has been issued by SCDES. In regard to the Cool Springs well, the well building contractor is scheduled to begin construction.

Mr. Lewis also shared with the Board information on our ASR capacity due to the South Transmission line break. In the months of December, January and February we injected 310 million gallons less than we did during the same time period last year. This year, we had to recover rather than inject. To prepare, we have purchased two portable water pumps that we plan to use at two of our interconnections with the City of Myrtle Beach. The pumps are necessary to boost the pressure from the City's system to the Bull Creek system.

In the ASR program, for the month of February, we had a net recovery of approximately 6.9 million gallons for an average daily recovery of 245,967 gallons.

UPDATE/STATUS: Field Operations Activities: In regard to other field operations activities, in February, the Wastewater Collections Department smoke tested 406,452 linear feet of gravity sewer line, cleaned and televised 2,117 linear feet of gravity sewer and responded to 230 sewer backups. The Water Department responded to 77 water quality requests, collected 403 water quality samples, inspected 206 cross connection devices, tested and inspected 288 fire hydrants and 697 isolation valves, responded to 28 emergency main line shutdowns and completed 3,904 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 FY 2026/2027 budget, the Board has approved over \$3.5 million in the rural water program. Since the last Board meeting, we have authorized 5 projects for design for 5,400 linear feet of pipeline and 5 new REUs. Two projects moved from the design phase to construction for 1,090 linear feet of pipeline and 4 REUs. We issued service authorization to 3 projects for 7,462 linear feet of pipeline and 8 new REUs.

On the sewer side, in the fiscal year 2026/2027 budget, the Board has approved over \$5.0 million in the rural sewer program. Since the last Board meeting, we have authorized 4 new projects for design that will add 4,190 linear feet of pipeline and 4 new REUs. Six projects moved from the design phase to construction for 7,990 linear feet of pipeline and 10 REUs. We issued service authorization to 2 projects for 1,650 linear feet of pipeline and 4 new REUs.

Currently, there are 90 active rural projects in design and 54 projects in construction that will add a total of 52 miles of pipeline and 865 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 2026, we have installed 4 miles of pipeline which includes 3 miles of waterline and one mile 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 February. In February, we received 19 new letters of intent. Eight projects were developer extension projects totaling 291 REUs. The other 11 projects were single-

service commercial projects totaling 72 REUs. We issued service authorization to 13 projects for 937 REUs which accounted for just over \$7.1 million in developer contributions. We held 9 preconstruction meetings in February.

Overall, we have a total of 95 active developer projects in the construction or close-out phase. 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 new projects have jumped back up since the beginning of the year. However, the REUs associated with the projects have decreased.

UPDATE/STATUS: Capital Projects: In regard to the Administration Building Expansion, we have finalized and executed the contract with Chancel Construction, Inc. for \$3,690,692. We are now working to schedule a pre-construction meeting. Once work begins, the project is expected to take 250 days.

In regard to the Conway Parallel 24" Water Transmission Upgrade, our consultant Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) recently obtained provisional approval from the USACOE for a Nationwide wetlands permit. The provisional approval is dependent on SCDES issuing the individual Water Quality Certification and the purchase of 13.85 mitigation credits.

In regard to the Highway 90 to Highway 905 Water Hydraulic Improvement project, our engineering consultant, Bolten & Menk, has completed the Preliminary Engineering Report and it has been sent to SRF for review.

In regard to the International Drive to North Booster Pump Station project, we are working with GMC on this project. They have the 100% plans and are submitting them to permitting agencies. We are also working on the requirements that SCDNR had as part of the agreement for giving us an easement around the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve.

In regard to the Peachtree Sewer Booster Pump Station project, we held a progress meeting with Hazen & Sawyer on March 4th to review the 60% plans. We also submitted a Project Questionnaire to SCDES as SRF funding is anticipated for this project.

Mr. Hardee asked Mr. Minor how many square feet were being added in the Administration Building Expansion. Mr. Minor was unsure of the square footage but stated we would be adding a net of 22 additional offices. Mr. Minor stated the bids were all very comparable, so he knows we received competitive bids.

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 March 2025 through February 2026. During the month of February, our customer base increased by 458 accounts, which brings our customer account total to 150,767. Over the last twelve consecutive months, our total customer base has increased by 3.6%. During the month of February, our active accounts increased by 488, inactive accounts decreased by 86 and our suspended accounts increased by 56.

In regard to REUs, during the month of February, our total REUs increased by 531, which brings our REU total to 220,308. Over the last twelve consecutive months, our total REUs have increased by 3.2%. During the month of February, our active REUs increased by 538, inactive REUs decreased by 49 and our suspended REUs increased by 42.

Mrs. Skipper also shared an overview of the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey with the Board. We distributed 4,000 random online surveys to our customers in January. We received 790 completed surveys. All participants who completed a survey will receive a \$10 credit on their account.

courteous, friendly, knowledgeable and efficient. Overall, the respondents were satisfied with the odor, taste, color, price, reliability and pressure of their drinking water. 84.05% believed their drinking water was safe, which is a 2.3% increase from last year. If given a choice, 94.81% of the respondents said they would choose GSWSA as their water provider.

THOMAS NEAT, CHIEF OF TECHNOLOGY

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

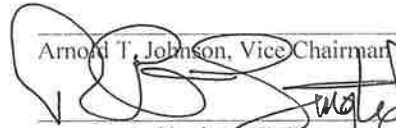
OTHER BUSINESS:

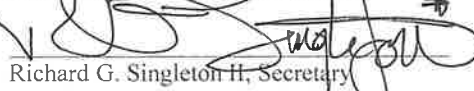
Chairman Hardee called the Board's attention to the Employee Recognition, Sod Donation Report, SC Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority Load Update Memo, upcoming Budget Retreat on Friday, May 1st and the upcoming 2026 AWWA Conference in Washington, DC from June 20th – June 25th.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried the Board went into executive session for the discussion of 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.


Benj A. Hardee, Chairman


Arnold T. Johnson, Vice Chairman



Richard G. Singleton H., Secretary

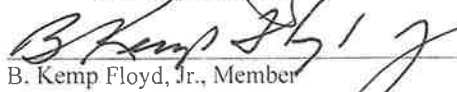

Sidney F. Thompson, Member


J. Liston Wells, Member

Approved via teleconference
Mark K. Lazarus, Member

L. Morgan Martin, Member


Radha B. Herring, Member


B. Kemp Floyd, Jr., Member