

GSSD Workshop Meeting Minutes. 9-2-2025

Attendees: Roxanne Aplanalp, Kip Bowler, Paula Guthrie, Dusty Leavitt, Odean Bowler

Employee Management: The board discussed moving to the second step of disciplinary action for the water operator due to unsatisfactory performance. Key issues cited for potential action include: Failure to take the monthly water sample by the 10th of the month. Failure to provide weekly reports to Paula as directed. Lack of communication regarding the spring maintenance.

The board reviewed the personnel handbook, identifying “inadequate performance of duties” and “Violation of GSSD policies” as potential causes for action. It was decided to wait until after the September 3rd meeting to see if the operator submits her work log before proceeding with a formal letter.

An employee has the right to appeal a disciplinary action within 10 days of notice, or the right is waived. The chairperson is responsible for instigating the investigation and can designate someone to act on their behalf.

A formal, three-step disciplinary process is required before significant action can be taken. This process includes an informal pre-disciplinary hearing and written notice via certified mail.

The board expressed a need to maintain accountability and not “back off” the process as they may have in the past. The employee’s performance will be judged based on her adherence to the board’s instructions. The employee’s current verbal reports, often just “fine” or “good,” are considered insufficient. The board requires more specific details, such as well run times and water tank levels. The employee previously rejected a standardized reporting form, preferring to use her own “diary-style” work log.

The board plans to mandate the use of a specific form for weekly reports. It was stated that policy is determined by what is tolerated, and the board needs to raise its standards.

A “kind of, sort of list” of potential replacement operators exists. The board has a one-year grace period to hire a new certified operator if the current one is lost. The current operator, when asked about her future plans, stated her role is a “public service for the city.”

Lead and Copper Testing: All required system testing was completed on July 25th and has been posted with the next round not due until 2028. A second step for the lead and copper test was due by August 25th, which required notifying the five residents who provided samples and certifying this with the Division of Drinking Water. It is unclear if the operator has completed this step, and she is expected to report on it at the next meeting.

Reporting and Data: The Water Use Data Report has still not been received, and the board needs to follow up on its status. The operator has not been providing consistent weekly updates or work logs to Paula as instructed at the July 9th meeting. The operator sent some readings (e.g., 30 psi, 146, 42), but their meaning, source, and accuracy are unknown. The board discussed requiring photographic proof of meter readings.

Spring Maintenance and Water Flow: There is uncertainty about whether the roots in the spring line were cleaned out. The operator mentioned someone came out and her grandsons helped, but she provided no formal report on the work, the cost, or if it improved water flow. Rural Water has equipment that could help for \$50 an hour, but it’s unclear if they were engaged. The board discussed manually measuring the spring’s flow but concluded it is too complex to do now and is better attempted in the winter.

A video inspection of the water tanks was reviewed by a company called AdvancedDiving. They provided an analysis and an estimate for repairs.

The primary recommendations are to add another 4-inch or 6-inch vent pipe to the old tank to reduce internal condensation and to reseal the concrete roof to prevent leaks from rain.

The total estimated cost for the repairs is approximately \$25,000. The roof resealing should be completed within the next 12 months.

Despite some rust, the tanks were noted to be in “really good shape” for their age, with one being described as one of the best seen. A phased repair plan was outlined for the water tank, with a total estimated cost of \$25,000 over two years. The work is projected to take two to three days, depending on whether the tasks are done together or separately.

Phase 1 (Next 12 Months): A decision is needed on adding a second vent pipe, estimated at \$8,000.

The roof needs to be sealed with an NSF 61 sealer, which could be done in one day. The cost of the sealer is unknown.

Phase 2 (Next 12-24 Months): Roots growing into the tank must be excavated from the outside before interior cracks can be repaired.

The rusty influent pipe needs to be replaced with new piping.

Interior cracks will be sealed with epoxy for an estimated \$4,200. The current crack size allows for direct epoxy application without needing to widen them.

Phase 3 (Next 3 Years): The overflow pipe is scheduled for replacement at an estimated cost of \$5,000.

Other Component Repairs: Two rusty interior pipes on a flange with four bolts need to be completely replaced, not repaired. The cost for these parts is estimated at \$1,200.

Lakeview Leak: A non-emergency leak was reported at the curve on Lakeview. The plan is to defer the repair to 2026 but to get bids from contractors this year to establish a budget. Three potential contractors were identified for the investigative bid process.

Inaccessible Water Meters: Several meters are difficult or impossible to access for reading. Gail Humphreys’ meter box is filled with dirt and needs to be dug out and straightened. Patrick Osmond’s meter is repeatedly buried by mud due to its location. Duncan’s meter is consistently covered by debris from nearby bushes.

Other meters belonging to Scott Holt and Calvin are also inaccessible and require the homeowners to self-report readings.

A suggestion was made to implement a fine for homeowners who do not keep their meters clear and accessible, as stipulated in the bylaws, but no decision was made.

System Issues: Valve cans near Bowler Road are frequently covered by dirt after rainfall. Subsequent cleanup efforts have resulted in the valve cans being ripped out, leaving the valves buried. One of two main water valves is currently inaccessible, likely covered up when the county put in new gravel on a road. The county needs to be involved to locate and protect the valve. The county recently fixed a hillside portion of a road with gravel but did not pave it. Paving the road would solve many problems, and the group plans to continue pressing the county on this issue.

The chlorination system is operated manually. The operator must physically adjust the chlorine feed, as the system is not high-tech enough to self-adjust based on water flow. The existing SCADA telemetry system, which could potentially automate the process, is not in use because it reportedly never worked correctly. Upgrading to a modern, automated chlorination system is considered to have a “pretty substantial” and likely prohibitive cost for the small system. A previous suggestion to move the chlorination system up to the spring has been definitively rejected. This is due to prohibitive costs, lack of power, and inaccessibility during high river levels, a decision previously confirmed with the Division of Drinking Water.

The master meter is not working correctly, and the cost to fix it is considered prohibitive. An engineer from Alpha has confirmed it is “working as good as it can work.” To comply with state reporting, individual meters are read four times a year to determine total water usage. This manual process is considered significantly cheaper than attempting to repair the master meter.

17 high-user notices were sent out.

The Church: A constantly running urinal was identified as the likely cause of high water consumption.

The Town Hall: The sprinkler system is wasting water by running down the street. A sprinkler on the corner is broken. The controller clock may be malfunctioning, causing the system to run twice a day. The system has been turned off for the past week due to rain.

The board will review and discuss the expenses from August. The minutes from the June and July meetings, which were sent out digitally, will be reviewed. The July minutes were noted as being 19 pages long, so a summary of action items was also provided.

A new recorder, that also transcribes audio, is being used for meetings to ensure an accurate record.

The group discussed the system's capacity to meet fire suppression demands. State regulations require fire flow storage sufficient for 1,000 gallons per minute for two hours (totaling 120,000 gallons). The GSSD (Gunlock Special Service District) has a higher goal of 1,500 gallons per minute for fire flow, which would require approximately 180,000 gallons. With a total system capacity of 300,000 gallons across two tanks, it was determined that keeping the tanks at least half full (150,000 gallons) would meet the state requirement and provide a cushion. The existing 300,000-gallon capacity was confirmed to have met all fire flow and peak capacity requirements at the time it was engineered in 2007.

The current conservation plan needs to be updated because it contains mandatory rules that are not being followed, such as requiring floats on livestock tanks. The existing rules, written in 1997, lack any enforcement or appeal processes. The group discussed hiring an attorney to update the rules and conservation plan. The estimated cost is a \$3,500 retainer plus a rate of \$250 an hour.

There is agreement that water rates need to be raised to fund these necessary compliance updates and other system needs. The board began discussing items to include in the 2026 budget. A suggestion was made to budget for the roof and epoxy on the 100K water tank. The need for a new well meter, estimated to cost around “three grand,” was also raised as a potential budget item. To meet 2025 requirements, the district must address one more non-compliant cross-connection. The cemetery project will be deferred from 2025 to 2026 to prioritize this compliance work. A board member will coordinate with Ethel, who has a list of properties needing a dual check valve, to select one in the subdivision for the 2025 project.

The board is updating its fire hydrant use policy but it is not yet ready for approval. There is a consensus to prohibit personal use of fire hydrants to prevent misuse. If use were to be allowed, the rules would need to be updated to include requirements for a meter. It is unclear whether the city or the fire department is responsible for purchasing a standard meter with a gate valve, and this needs to be clarified to avoid a duplicate purchase.

A major topic of discussion was the CLP Futures connection, which is providing water outside the GSSD’s legal service boundaries. Legal advice indicated that the state rules are “fuzzy,” and shutting off water for a paying customer, even one outside the boundary, carries a risk of a lawsuit that the district could lose. The district’s inconsistent history of enforcement, such as not shutting off service for accounts with thousands of dollars in arrears (one owes almost \$3,000), weakens its position. The meter for the connection has shown no usage for the past three days, which the board views as an opportunity to act. The board plans to make a motion to turn off the CLP Futures connection on September 4th. Service will only be restored after the user provides proof to a GSSD director that the water’s end use is within the district’s boundary. Violation Fee: The motion will include a “serious violation fee of \$5,000” to be assessed if the meter is turned back on without GSSD approval. The connection would remain locked until the violation fee is paid and compliance is verified.

High Water Usage: This single connection is on track to use one million gallons this year, having already consumed almost 900,000 gallons for one livestock tank. The board discussed adopting a high-usage tiered rate structure in the future to address such issues.

The Brady Account: This account is overdue by \$1,380. The board discussed the difficulty of shutting off the water, as they have not enforced this with other accounts in the past.

Patrick Osmond's Account: This property is scheduled for a foreclosure auction on September 19th, 2025, with an outstanding balance of \$800. The board has decided to place a lien on the property tax so the new owner will be responsible for paying the debt.

General Lien Policy: The board's policy is to place a lien on properties with bills that are three or more months overdue. Four other properties were at risk of a lien but submitted payment in time. A previous incident was recalled where a meter was turned off for non-payment, but the user turned it back on for his livestock without board authorization, and no further action was taken.

A rate increase is planned for the next budget year to cover expenditures and necessary repairs. The board compared their rates to other cities. Gunlock has the highest base rate, but it is a flat fee of \$55 for up to 15,000 gallons. Other cities like Tokerville have a similar base rate (\$55) but for a lower volume (10,000 gallons) and then charge significantly more for additional usage through a tiered system. LaVerkin's base rate is \$50, and St. George's is \$27 for 5,000 gallons.

A significant number of properties use culinary water to irrigate their yards, as using a single system for both culinary and irrigation water is prohibited due to cross-connection risks. It was estimated that only about a third of properties have a separate irrigation system.

A letter was sent to a new incoming board member, Dallin, to confirm his ability to attend meetings and contribute, as his pilot training requires him to be away frequently.

Board members are required to complete Open Meeting Training. A suggestion was made to hold a group training session at a future meeting to ensure completion. New officers will need to take a longer version of the training, which is estimated to take about an hour.

The group plans to inform the community that upgrades to the chlorination system and master meter are prohibitively expensive at this time. This information will be reiterated at the meeting scheduled for September 3rd, 2025 and will also be included in the September bill insert.

A recent emergency highlighted significant gaps in the district's communication protocol. There was no consistent message delivered to residents, and the established communication plan was not followed. A suggestion was made to develop a formal system with defined threat levels and corresponding conservation rules to be included in the conservation plan. The board needs to establish clear rules and fines for excess water use during declared emergencies.

Action Items

Follow up on the status of the Water Use Data Report.

Paula will wait until after the September 3rd meeting to see if the operator provides her work log before drafting a second disciplinary letter.

The chairperson will begin documenting all phone calls and directives given to the employee.

Bring the standardized reporting form to the meeting on September 3rd, 2025 to give to the employee..

Prepare to discuss peak capacity and fire suppression requirements at the next meeting.

Determine which tank repairs to prioritize and include them in the October budget.

Inspect the meters for Gail Humphreys and Patrick Humphreys to determine a course of action for repair.

- Create a list of meters and valves that require maintenance or relocation for future budgeting.
- Continue to follow up with the county about paving the road.
- Include information in the September bill insert explaining why major system upgrades are prohibitively expensive.
- Review and highlight sections of the conservation plan that need to be questioned, removed, or updated with enforcement language.
- A formal motion will be written and presented to turn off the CLP Futures connection on September 4th, including terms for a violation fee and requirements for restoring service.