

Gray Water District
TRUSTEES' MEETING

May 18, 2026

Location: 80 Shaker Road,
Gray, ME 04039

Present: Bruce Sawyer, Joe Murray, Bill Gardner, Adam Wilkinson, John Roy, Jon Ziegra,
Recorder: Shannon Krey. Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: Motion/Second by Murray/ Wilkinson to accept draft 3 of the 27 April 2026, minutes as submitted. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Additions to the Agenda:

Trustee Reports Added: Adam Wilkinson stated he had “some trustee reports” to include on the agenda. He will go over them when we get to that point.

Superintendent's Report:

1. **Water Pump Operations** Pumps 1 and 2 averaged 335,533 gallons per day. Pump 3 averaged 91,539 gallons per day. Samples were absent from bacteria.
2. **Security Camera Installation:** Staff rented an excavator and installed conduit/coax lines for new security cameras. Six cameras were installed around the facility. Cameras were considered a worthwhile investment after a recent break-in attempt. A grant was secured for the cost of the camera system.
3. **Break-In Incident:** Someone attempted to break into/disable the trucks by damaging toolbox locks with screwdrivers. Nothing appeared to be stolen. The incident happened just before the cameras became operational. The incident was reported to the Drinking Water Program.
4. **Seasonal/Part-Time Staffing** Former summer employee Garner Klinger returned part-time. He is working two days a week while also working for his father's company. Staff have been focused on spring cleanup, brush cutting around tanks, hydrant painting and maintenance, cleaning pump stations, seeding, repairing plow damaged areas, and general property maintenance.
5. **Water Line Failure / Leak** A significant drop in pressure, and approximately 15,000-gallon loss per day was detected last Thursday. The cause was traced back to a failed plastic fitting on a water service line. Discussion emphasized problems with plastic fittings and preference for brass components. Staff stated they now require brass fittings and no flexible connections. Additional replacement parts and fittings are on order.

6. **Ongoing Project Work** Bill Gardner stated most of his month has been devoted to the Yarmouth Rd project. More details were expected later under the business section.

Trustee Reports:

1. **Watershed Ordinance Review:** Trustees attended a presentation on the updated watershed protection ordinance. Revisions were made based on citizen feedback. Discussion focused on protecting watershed areas while balancing development needs.
2. **Zoning and Ordinance Review:** The Ordinance Advisory Committee (OAC) is reviewing town zoning regulations. Current zoning rules were described as overly complicated and difficult for businesses to navigate. Goal is to simplify and streamline zoning and ordinance processes.
3. **Commercial vs. Residential Development:** Discussion centered on major road corridors (Routes 26, 100 North/South, etc.) being more appropriate for commercial or mixed-use development. Concerns were raised that current zoning does not reflect how these areas are used. Trustees discussed creating more flexible mixed business/residential zones.
4. **Business Development Concerns:** Businesses struggle to establish operations because zoning restrictions are too complex. There was interest in making regulations more “common sense” and easier to work with.
5. **Transition Zones and Landowner Concerns:** Questions were raised about designating large private properties as commercial without consulting property owners. Concerns that some proposed zoning changes could negatively affect residential areas.
6. **Housing Density and Traffic Concerns:** Trustees discussed proposed half-acre lot zoning in some areas. Concerns included: too many driveways, increased traffic hazards, and existing road safety issues. Suggestion was made to increase minimum lot sizes to reduce congestion.
7. **Commercial Zones and Existing Homes:** all zones can eventually become surrounded by businesses. Mixed-use zoning was seen as a more balanced approach in some areas.
8. **Wellhead Protection / Water District Concerns:** Some zoning and wellhead protection decisions remain unresolved. Discussion included: returning a triangle shaped area on Rt 26, near Hannaford, into the wellhead 2 protection zone, thereby eliminating the existing BT2 zone, and maintaining all existing wellhead protection zones.
9. **Environmental and Infrastructure Considerations:** Commercial development was viewed as potentially placing less strain on septic systems than dense residential development. Increased runoff and traffic were acknowledged as tradeoffs.

10. **Future Process:** Trustees emphasized that zoning review will take time. Public input is encouraged throughout the process. A former town employee, Doug Webster, may return to assist with revisions.
11. **Town Manager Communication:** Trustees received an email response from the Town Manager and planned to review it under new business.
12. **No Additional Trustee Business:** Meeting concluded with no additional trustee reports or action items.

Old Business:

FEMA Grant (Hazard Mitigation):

The district was awarded a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant totaling \$51,766.31, covering 75% of the approved cost for a new generator project. The district's local share of the project will be approximately \$17,255.43. A pre-construction walkthrough with FEMA was scheduled for the following day, and the generator has already been ordered. Along with the generator installation, additional electrical upgrades are being completed after Pollard Electric determined the transformer in the generator building was severely underpowered, operating at only 30 amps when it should have been 100 amps. Although the transformer replacement was originally planned as part of the project, management chose to complete the upgrade immediately to avoid future failures. The district will initially pay project costs upfront and later seek reimbursement through the FEMA grant process once approved work is completed. Estimated lead times are approximately 20 weeks for the generator and 14 weeks for the automatic transfer switch (ATS), with the overall project expected to continue into late fall.

Action: The board reviewed next steps for the FEMA generator project, including a scheduled pre-construction walkthrough with FEMA, ordering the new generator, and beginning electrical upgrades to replace an underpowered transformer. The project will remain on future meeting agendas until work is complete in late fall 2026.

State Land Water Source (fish hatchery): The discussion centered on the Gray Water District's efforts to strengthen the resiliency of the municipal water supply while maintaining coordination with the state fish hatchery (Dry Mills Hatchery). Bill Gardner contacted the acting commissioner at Maine Fish and Game after revising a previously drafted letter. The state responded positively, acknowledging the district's concerns and the importance of preserving adequate water supply for the hatchery. The agency said it would review the proposal and provide guidance on next steps, though a formal follow-up response was still pending. Trustees emphasized the need to involve engineers and technical experts in future discussions and noted that while the water district has charter rights to water resources in Gray, any work must still comply with permitting and regulatory requirements.

Action: Bill Gardner will continue follow-up with the Maine Fish and Game acting commissioner regarding the district's proposal and is considering reaching out again for a response. The district will wait for formal feedback from Fish and Game outlining next steps.

Rate Case: The board discussed the upcoming rate case, noting that all required advertisements have been completed and a public hearing is scheduled for June 1st at 5:00 PM at the library. Members were encouraged to review the rate case materials in advance, particularly key details such how the proposed percentage increase translates into actual dollar amounts, and to be prepared for questions. The hearing will be presented and led by the firm that developed our rate case. While turnout is typically low, the board expects and welcomes public participation.

Action: No additional action was taken beyond preparation for the hearing.

Yarmouth Rd Project: is progressing, with 18 services already tied into the 12-inch main and multiple leaks repaired, though the existing water main remains in poor condition due to long-term deterioration, repeated breaks, and installation issues on ledge that make full replacement difficult and costly. Construction has also generated public complaints regarding traffic plates, noise, access disruptions, and alleged property impacts, which staff are actively managing while continuing work. Ongoing efforts include hydrant relocation near Apple Tree, service tie-ins, and phased line improvements, along with temporary road restoration and planned pressure testing and chlorination once sections are completed.

Action: Project on going

LD 2173: No recent updates or substantive information provided from Town on how they are addressing recent in State mandates on ADUs. Trustee Murray clarified the official title of this item The group also clarified the official title of this item was changed to both reflect both active State initiatives.

Action: None.

Ron Nevers Main Ext.: Noted that the project is moving forward. Required easements have been obtained and with the necessary parts already ordered and paid for. John Merrill will install the extension when time allows, and the project is expected to eventually connect to Woodcock Drive, part of the system.

Action: None.

Pump Work, Hegarty Plumbing: Frank had been delayed due to a recent health issue but is expected to return and assist with work starting the following day. The team is planning to conduct flow tests on Pump 1 and then pull and inspect. A new pump 1 will be installed, and work will then move to pulling up pump 2 for inspection and repairs.

Action: Proceed with flow testing on Pump 1.

RFP for PFAS: Bill Gardner reported that he received a proposal from Olver Associates for the PFAS. Wright Pierce Engineers are still waiting for full sample results before submitting their own proposal. Some laboratory results remain outstanding, only Well 2 data results have come back so far. The results for PFAS in well 2 were 6 parts per trillion, raising concerns about regulatory compliance and when potential “breakthrough” might appear in finished water. Staff discussed uncertainty around how contamination levels may show up in treated water and emphasized the need to coordinate with regulators and the town on next steps. The discussion also referenced broader tightening regulations on PFAS (“forever chemicals”) and the likelihood that additional treatment measures may eventually be required.

Action: Awaiting remaining lab results before finalizing the PFAS RFP proposal.

Master Plan: Bill Gardner reported that the Master Plan is moving forward and that the district received a \$30,000 grant from the Drinking Water Program for the cost of the plan. He noted that he also received a waiver, eliminating the need for a formal bid process and allowing the work to proceed through partnering arrangements. The plan involves updating and revising the existing master plan, with Bill working through corrections and coordinating with an engineer to finalize the document. Overall, the project is expected to continue toward completion with improved funding support and collaboration. An updated plan is essential part of our ongoing grant application process.

Action: Continue updating and revising the master plan in coordination with the engineer and proceed with the grant-funded work under the approved waiver process.

Androscoggin Bank Municipal Bond: Bill Gardner reported on municipal bond-funded equipment purchases and remaining project funds, noting expenditures of about \$51,000 for a generator, \$32,000 for a vacuum trailer, and \$7,600 for a redundant backup pump motor intended to protect system reliability during equipment failures. He stated there is still approximately \$95,000 in escrow, which is allocated toward upcoming pump work, generator-related costs, and other equipment and contractor expenses. He also explained plans to store the old generator with Coty Crane for a monthly fee, with the potential to sell it for around \$10,000, which would help offset costs. Overall, the discussion focused on managing remaining bond funds to support ongoing infrastructure upgrades and equipment reliability improvements.

Action: Continue allocating and tracking remaining municipal bond funds for scheduled equipment and pump upgrades and proceed with planned storage and potential sale of surplus generator through Coty Crane.

Invoice Cloud IVR (pay by phone service): Bill Gardner presented Invoice Cloud (IVR paid-by-phone service), explaining it as an additional payment option that the district would pay for to support customer transactions, though he noted he does not fully manage the system details. He emphasized that the board has a fiduciary responsibility in approving expenditures and acknowledged prior discussion that the service was considered useful. It was stated that the service was not directly requested by customers but could be added as a convenience feature. Overall, the discussion focused on whether funding the service was appropriate and understood as part of broader payment system offerings. Sudiek has been working with Invoice Cloud on this and will be able to present more information about costs, value, and implementation upon her return.

Action: Hold for Sudiek's return, and additional information.

Sanitary Survey: The discussion on the Sanitary Survey focused on preliminary findings from the recent inspection, which was positive with only minor issues noted. The inspector was satisfied with overall operations but identified concerns such as brush and vegetation growth around tanks and the need to report a recent security break-in and explain removal of barbed wire fencing. Staff noted that vegetation cleanup has already been addressed and that security improvements, including fencing changes, are under consideration. A broader discussion followed about upgrading or redesigning the front fence and entrance for improved security, traffic control, and operational safety, including the possibility of installing an electronic gate and reconfiguring the parking area. Additional long-term facility considerations were also raised, including potential building replacement or relocation, though no decisions were made.

Action: Await the final sanitary survey report and quotes for fencing/entrance options (including repair vs. redesign with gate system).

New business

TIF Request/New Water Source: The discussion focused on the TIF request for new water source funding. The district noted that a \$300,000 request had been submitted and that the TIF funds have already been allocated to other projects. However, staff emphasized that the remaining funds could potentially be reconsidered, and that the Town of Gray's Acting Town Manager has offered to meet with the district to discuss priorities and the formal application process. Trustees agreed that a meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible to clarify whether funding priorities can be adjusted to support new water infrastructure and to understand what additional documentation or formal steps are required. The conversation also highlighted the importance of elevating water supply needs alongside other planned municipal spending, given concerns about system capacity and water quality trends (including PFAS and arsenic monitoring).

Action: Superintendent Gardner and Trustee Murray to meet with Contact the Town of Gray's Acting Town Manager Lauren Asselin to discuss the formal TIF application and approval process, including what documentation is required, how funding reallocation requests are managed, and what steps must be completed for consideration of the new water source project.

Personnel Policy Item Added/Corrected: It was noted that the personnel policy item had not actually been completed. The policy needs to be printed, distributed, and signed for by all employees.

Action: Sudiek to issue new policy and secure signature sheets.

Other

1. Schedule for next Trustee Meeting: Monday, June 15, 2026
2. Motion to end the meeting was, unanimous. Adjourned 7:44 pm, May 18, 2026

Outstanding Items:

- Route 100 TIF (South)
- Planning for future CIP programming
- Search for new water source
- Front fencing/parking
- Woodcock Dr phase II
- Injection/treatment facility
- Shaker Rd main replacement
- Lewiston Rd project
- TIF expenditures
- Landfill test results
- Town garage fuel tank
- Hydrant painting
- GWD newsletter
- Callaway Drive waterline complaint

Submitted by:

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