

Tiverton Wastewater District Annual Report

July 1, 2023- June 30, 2024

Submitted July 1, 2024





Annual Report 2023-2024

To: TWWD Board
From: Mark Nimiroski, Executive Director TWWD
cc: David R. Petrarca, Jr. Esq.
Date: July 1, 2024

Message from the Executive Director

This annual report covers the fiscal year ending in 2024, effectively July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This has been a very exciting year for the Tiverton Wastewater District (TWWD).

There was a lot to do this year. Four months of the fiscal year had already passed by the time I came on board in November, and we had to make up a lot of ground to get stability within the organization and start to move forward in a productive direction. We added a part-time bookkeeper who has been an amazing addition to our team and has been an important part of helping us all get caught up in key areas.

We have completed our Phase 1 sewer expansion project and have started to take stock of where we should go next. In December of 2023 the Town of Tiverton passed a moratorium on new large residential building developments because of increasing development pressure. One of the reasons given for the moratorium is that the demand for water and sewer service, along with other municipal services, will continue to increase. This has made it very clear that we need to know a lot more about what our current capacity is, where that capacity is located, and where we intend to expand within the existing housing stock in Tiverton. It isn't our place to be the gatekeeper for new developments that have been approved by the town government and are consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan. However, we need to be very careful to understand where our capacity exists to responsibly serve new developments.

In order to better understand our system, we have begun the process of rewriting our facilities plan. This document will examine our current system and provide analysis of where current zoning and growth patterns are likely to drive expansion needs. It will lay out and re-prioritize our phased expansion areas, using a variety of factors. These will include cost, critical municipal needs, environmental improvement, and regulatory concerns among other factors. Additionally, we will take this opportunity to modernize our data management system to a Geographic Information System (GIS) based system. This will allow us to better serve our customers, more easily manage our data, and provide planning level analysis. We have been very careful in selecting the consultant to complete this plan by using a qualifications-based selection (QBS) process. The winning bidder is Weston and Sampson, and we are confident that they will do an excellent job rewriting the plan. We expect this plan to be completed by September 2025.

We have also begun the process of developing our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). TWWD has miles of sewer pipe, and 4 pump stations. One of the pump stations is at the end of its useful lifespan, 2 are very close to the end, and the fourth is about 7 years away. Managing a complete overhaul of this critical infrastructure will require careful planning and budgeting. Our entire system of sewer lines will require inspection with Closed Caption Television (CCTV) so that we can identify sections of pipe that might need repair or replacement. Finally, our documentation requires development and updating. Our facilities plan and other planning documents will help us prioritize critical infrastructure, and other major initiatives so that the work is done in a thoughtful and methodical way and ensure that funding is available when the work needs to be done.

I will ensure that we continue to accomplish our mission “to safeguard public health, protect and improve ground and surface water resources by implementing efficient and effective wastewater management within the Tiverton Wastewater District in Tiverton, Rhode Island.”

If you are not familiar with my background, it is available at this link:

[Mark Nimiroski | LinkedIn](#)

Tiverton Wastewater District
Approved Budget Spreadsheet



TIVERTON
WASTEWATER DISTRICT

APPROVED
FY 2024-2025

Revenue

1 Sewer Services Income		
1 Sewer Usage Fee Income	\$	916,076.46
2 Operations Maintenance Administration (OMA) Fees	\$	584,179.06
Total 1 Sewer Services Income	\$	1,500,255.52
2 Other Income		
1 Application/Inspection Fees	\$	2,000.00
2 Balance Forward Collections		
4 Penalties & Late Fees	\$	3,000.00
5 Interest Earned	\$	4,500.00
6 Mid Cycle Billing Fee	\$	700.00
7 Abutter Betterments/Assessments	\$	28,000.00
Total 2 Other Income	\$	38,200.00
Total Revenue	\$	1,538,455.52

Expenditures

1 Sewer Operating Costs		
1 Sewer Usage Payment to Fall River	\$	783,353.91
2 Sewer System Maintenance	\$	45,000.00
3 Pump Station Electrical/Alarm	\$	25,000.00
4 Pump Station Maintenance	\$	35,000.00
6 Pump Station Service	\$	13,000.00
7 Pump Station Equipment Purchase/Installation	\$	18,000.00
8 Capital Reserve/Short Lived Assets	\$	24,000.00
9 Private Connections Service and Repairs	\$	5,000.00
Total 1 Sewer Operating Costs	\$	948,353.91

Gross Profit	\$	590,101.61
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2 Payroll & Benefits		
1 Wages & Salaries	\$	321,000.00
3 Employer FIT & FICA Expense	\$	25,000.00
4 457 Company Match Expense	\$	10,000.00
5 Medical & Dental Benefits	\$	22,000.00
6 Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$	4,500.00
Total 2 Payroll & Benefits	\$	382,500.00

3 Administrative & General Expenses (A&G)		
Advertising (Legal Notices)	\$	2,000.00
Audit	\$	15,000.00
Bad Debts (Uncollectable)		
Bank Charges	\$	400.00
Bay Street and Other Abutters Project	\$	28,000.00
Billing Expense	\$	3,500.00
Bond Counsel	\$	10,000.00
Dues & Subscriptions	\$	800.00
Insurance - Liability	\$	9,300.00
Legal Fees	\$	12,000.00
Office Special Expense		
Office Supplies	\$	6,500.00
Postage	\$	6,000.00
Professional Services	\$	52,000.00
Rent or Lease Office Space	\$	20,400.00
Total 3 Administrative & General Expenses (A&G)	\$	165,900.00

4 IT & Software		
1 Billing Software Fee	\$	3,000.00
2 Computer Hardware Individual PC & Service	\$	5,000.00
3 Computer Hardware (Servers) & Software	\$	6,000.00
4 Payroll Outside Processing Expense	\$	3,750.00
Total 4 IT & Software	\$	17,750.00

5 Maintenance Expenses (Except Sewer & PS)		
1 Snow Plowing	\$	3,000.00
2 Tools & Safety Equipment	\$	5,000.00
Total 5 Maintenance Expenses (Except Sewer & PS)	\$	8,000.00

5 Utilities Expenses (Except PS)		
1 Cell Phone Reimbursement	\$	2,400.00
2 Utilities - Office Electric	\$	2,000.00
3 Utilities - Office Propane Gas	\$	2,500.00
4 Telephone/Internet	\$	2,500.00
Total 5 Utilities Expenses (Except PS)	\$	9,400.00

Total Expenditures	\$	583,550.00
Net Operating Revenue	\$	6,551.61

Financial statements

The annual budget for the fiscal year ending on 06/30/2024. TWWD closed the budget with revenue greater than expenditures. Surplus operations funding will be transferred to the appropriate capital account.



Policy overhaul

We have done a complete review of our policies, and established a priority list for which ones need to be rewritten first. We have completed a rewrite of the following policies. They have received the review and approval of our board of directors and are posted on our website under “Customer Resources.”

- Water Shut off Policy
- Late Penalty
- Temporary Hardship Policy
- OMA and Usage fee Policy
- Grinder Pump Use and Abuse Policy

Emergency response plan

We have updated our Emergency Response plan and have identified key personnel to ensure that they have access to the plan in case of a disaster of any kind.

New Projects

We have started 2 new projects that are key to the continued development of TWWD

- Facilities plan update: as stated above this is meant to be an assessment of our current condition, and a roadmap to help guide future growth.
- Bay St. and other Abutters: We have begun the process of connecting Abutters to our existing sewer main starting with Bay St. and moving to eventually connect all our abutters that are interested in participating in this project. This project offers a low-cost fee to connect because we are using State of Rhode Island grant and loan money

Additionally, we are considering a Bay St. neighborhood project, and are trying to build momentum. We need to complete our facilities plan to have a clear sense of what should be our priority for larger expansion projects. However, we have identified the Bay St neighborhood as an important area for future expansion because of the contaminated soils in the area, and the increased difficulty for homeowners to replace or upgrade existing septic systems.

Communications

We are committed to improving our communications. Our customers deserve regular project updates, information about priorities, and assurances that we are managing their infrastructure in a responsible way. We need regular contact with our partners to ensure that we are all aware of the priorities of each agency, and that we are actively working to support each other when possible. Our outreach efforts include some formal communications efforts, but we have many informal customer interactions where our staff strive to be helpful, courteous, attentive, and responsive.

- FAQ: We have posted a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to answer many of the recurring questions/complaints that we saw on social media.
- Annual Report: this is the second annual report that we have produced. This is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the year and highlight our accomplishments from the previous year.



- Customer outreach:
 - We sent out a mailer to customers that are served by our Blackbird Pump Station. It has been fouled by wipes a lot lately, so we sent out a mailer to try to remind customers that they should not flush wipes, even if they are labeled “flushable.”
 - We held a public meeting to introduce our Bay St. and other Abutters Project. We also have sent several mailers and emails and made phone calls to update the potential customers in this area.
 - We held our annual public meeting to allow customers to vote to approve our budget and elect members to our board of directors.
- Communications plan: We have been working on a formal communications plan. It is in draft form, and we hope to finalize it by next fiscal year.

Compliance

MADEP and USEPA Issued a draft permit number MA0100382 on February 1, 2024. This permit is to allow Fall River to discharge treated effluent from their sewage treatment plant to Mount Hope Bay. The regulating agencies have changed their basic approach to how they treat entities such as ours that don't have a plant but discharge to another agency's plant. We're referred to as a “satellite community.” Plant operators will no longer be the primary oversight of satellite communities. State and federal environmental regulators will be the primary oversight of our operations. If the permit stands as drafted, TWWD will have many new reporting requirements, so this is a significant development. Fall River had substantial comments on the draft permit, and TWWD commented as well. All of these documents are in the public record. TWWD is in compliance with all current state regulations that govern our district.

Infrastructure and Operations

We currently have 936 individual accounts, including commercial, industrial, and residential customers. This represents roughly 4,600 people. This is about a third of the residents of the Town of Tiverton. These customers are served by our existing infrastructure, including four metered pump stations that make up an important component of our physical infrastructure. Operation of these stations has been mostly routine, except for emergency service calls on Blackbird Court Pump Station. All pump stations have emergency power generators and are remotely monitored using a Mission Communications system (the parameters monitored varies by station). Usage continues to track upward year to year.

- Blackbird Court Pump Station - This station has two 220 GPM pumps. This pump primarily serves Countryview Estates. We have had problems with wipes and rags in the past. An educational effort has been made to homeowners in the area, but the problem continues. This pump station is at the end of its useful life and is a high priority for a full rehabilitation on our capital improvement plan.
- Schooner Drive - This station has two 150 GPM pumps and services Riverside Drive and the Boathouse Restaurant. This pump is approaching the end of its useful life and is the next priority for a full rehabilitation as part of our capital improvement plan.

- Industrial Way - There are two 500 GPM pumps at this station. This location is the beginning of the Mount Hope Interceptor. This station serves the Police Station, the DPW, and the Industrial Park including the Longplex and Progress Road. This pump station is approaching the end of its useful life and will need a full rehabilitation as part of our capital improvement plan.
- Mill Street – This is TWWD’s largest pump station. There are two submersible 600 gallon per minute (GPM) pumps at this station. The biggest user of this system is Bourne Mills apartments; but it also serves Mill Street, Walnut Street, and portions of State Avenue, Shove Street, Canonicus Street, and Hilton Street. This pump station still has several years left of its useful life, so it is a lower priority for rehabilitation on the capital improvement plan, but long-term planning must provide funding for this project in the future.

The Mount Hope Interceptor is the main connection between the TWWD system and the Fall River system. This is currently owned by the Town of Tiverton. TWWD will assume ownership of this asset once the Town of Tiverton completes cleaning, inspecting and making any necessary repairs to the system. The Town of Tiverton maintains an account of \$400,000 for major repairs to this sewer line as required by CRMC. TWWD should assume control of these funds upon receipt of the interceptor and should place these funds in an interest-bearing account as protection against inflation.

Funding

TWWD receives the majority of its funding through the collection of Usage fees and Operations, Management and Administration (OMA) fees. Additional funding for sewer expansion projects has come from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) loans. TWWD will continue to seek additional grant and loan funding to complete projects.

Partnerships

- The City of Fall River – The city’s sewage treatment plant treats the sewage that we collect. TWWD discussed the draft NPDES permit with Fall River and issued comments on the draft.
- USDA - It has provided the majority of the funding for Phase 1 Sewer Expansion project through a 40-year loan. TWWD is responsible for keeping up with requirements in the Letter of Conditions (LOC) for the duration of this loan.
- Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) - Has assisted TWWD in reviewing our budget during March 2024, with follow up in June 2024. They will conduct a rate study starting next fiscal year. They provided a template for our Emergency Response Plan and reviewed our plan once it was written.
- The Town of Tiverton - TWWD must abide by zoning and permitting regulations and the building codes of the town where we are located. We have had multiple coordination calls with the Town administrator. We have ensured that the Town of Tiverton and TWWD are communicating on important shared topics. We have had phone calls with the town planner and the planning board to assure that the planning board is aware of developer information requests.



- Stonebridge Fire District Water Department (SFDWD) - TWWD relies on SFDWD to oversee our water shut-offs in their service area when TWWD customers are delinquent on payments. As of 6/30/2023 TWWD has 133 active customers in the SFDWD system. SFDWD supplies the water usage readings to TWWD for accurate billing and reporting. More SFDWD customers may be added in future phased expansion.
- North Tiverton Fire District Water Department NTFD - TWWD relies on NTFD to oversee our water shut-offs in their service area when TWWD customers are delinquent on payments. NTFD has the majority of TWWD customers at 706. NTFD reports the water usage to TWWD for billing and reporting.
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) - TWWD is required to get street opening permits and must sign off on utility permits for any sewer work done in the State right-of-way. We must work around stormwater infrastructure in State maintained road areas.
- Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) - We are in regular contact for payment details. We have reached out for loan funding for our Facilities Plan. We submit a series of projects to be funded on the Project Priority List (PPL) every year. Projects must be on this list to be eligible for funding.
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) - Additional funding for our Phase I Sewer Expansion project was received from RIDEM. Wetlands permitting, sewer system design approval and operation and maintenance (including accidental sewage discharges). We have regular contact by email.
- Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) - Permitting in the coastal area is under the jurisdiction of CRMC.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) – The USEPA provided some additional funding for our Phase I Sewer Expansion project through the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program funds managed by RIDEM. Often it has grant money available for clean water projects.
- Tri-State Wastewater - Maintenance contractor for alarms, pump failures, etc.
- D’Ambra Construction - Has done the construction work for the Phase 1 Sewer Expansion project. Overseen by AECOM.
- AECOM - Manage the work on the Phase 1 Sewer Expansion project. Project is wrapping up with final funding.
- Pare Engineering - Has been providing us with review services for large developments. Regular contact with TWWD engineer.

Seeking additional partners should be a priority going forward.

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) - They often have grant money available for clean water projects.
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – Possible source of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant Program. Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program may be available.
- National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grants. The National Coastal Resilience Fund is a possibility.



Tools

TWWD is committed to using the most modern tools available for our planning and data management. We have started to develop and will continue to develop graphic information system (GIS) tools. TWWD uses MuniBilling Cloud Software for customer billing, reporting and tracking. QuickBooks Online is used for financial tracking and reporting. We also use Microsoft Office applications, Google cloud storage and have a voice over internet protocol (VOIP) phone system.

Board of Directors/Board meetings

TWWD is governed by a board of directors that consists of no more than seven members and no fewer than five. The board meets monthly, and a quorum consists of four voting members. Currently TWWD has a membership of six directors. Over the last year we had two resignations from the board and two appointments of new members to the board. This has resulted in a stable number of members, only one member short of a full board. Recruitment of qualified volunteers has been a challenge, and continued active recruitment of board members is necessary as we try to have a full board.

Looking ahead

The new Executive Director has been in place since November 2023 to lead TWWD into the future, and we're very excited about the possibilities. We issued a contract to update the TWWD Wastewater Facilities Plan. We should be able to secure funding for this and start the project in FY 2024-2025.

We plan to modernize our data management system by expanding our use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) as part of our facilities plan update.

As required by our agreement with Fall River, we will be working toward accurately metering wastewater flows contributed by TWWD.





Final word

Our goal is to make TWWD one of the best small utilities in the region. We are already well on our way in making key improvements in the following areas:

- Infrastructure maintenance and upgrade
- Budget forecasting
- Funding adequate reserves for capital improvements, emergency repairs, etc.
- Customer service
- Communication
- Staff professional development
- Expansion of service into planned areas
- Clarity in policies and procedures
- Data management

TWWD staff and board are committed to excellence and look forward to growing with the District.