

GORE HILL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
406-761-6528
Minutes of the Public Board Meeting
Public Meeting
January 13, 2026

Board Members present: David Schuler, Dennis Peppenger, Jerry Ulmen, Kristie Blackford
Conducting: David Schuler
Recording Secretary: Christy Walter
Operator: Brian Blackford
Bookkeeper: Arny Schandelson
Guests: Susan Bersuch, Ashlee Liedle, Mike Carroll, Thomas Edmonds

The Public Meeting began at 7:00 pm

Motion to open the meeting: Jerry
Second: Dennis Passed

Motion to accept the minutes of 12/23/2025: Jerry
Second: Dennis Passed

Checks Received at the meeting: #502 \$300.00 ck # 112448 # 541 \$70.54 ck # 14065

Old Business:

#705 ~ Homeowner was questioning what the status of the generator was. He offered to help us sell the generator Dennis said he will ask Grant to start the process of selling the generator for \$16,500. 11/12/2024 ~ Homeowner has placed the ad on craigslist with Dennis's phone number. 6/24/2025 ~ the price has been reduced to \$15,000 and Dennis will get an advertisement with MT Rural Water. 07/22/2025 MT Rural water will post it on their website. Dennis and Brian are going to do a trouble shoot on the generator battery. 8/12/2025 ~ nothing new to report 8/26/2025 ~ Townsend Electric may have someone interested in the generator. Brian will follow up tomorrow. 10/8/2025 ~ Nothing new

Mercy has indicated that she will be submitting a letter of resignation. She was appointed to fill Collette's position thru May 2027. She turned in her keys but we are waiting on written notice. 12/10/2025~ We have received Mercy's letter of resignation as of 11/29/2025. 1/13/2026 ~Susan and Ashlee are interested.

Motion to appoint to Susan to complete Collette's term: Dennis
Second: Jerry Passed

Motion to hire Ashlee to replace Christy Walter as the secretary: Jerry
Second: Kristie Passed

The board discussed implementing a late fee for customers who do not make their payment by the end of the month and is doing research on this matter. Under MCA7-13-2301 Paragraph 3 Charges and penalties are authorized for water systems. This will be discussed in more depth during future. 12/10/2025~ Dave supplied the board with more cities and towns policies on late fees. The board needs to review this further and update accordingly. 1/13/2026 - Dave drafted a late fee policy with a 30-day late fee being charged 3% and 60 day late being shut off. Dave provided copies to the board for them to review and discuss further Feb 24 2026.

Cost of living adjustment for 2026 is 2.8%. It was mentioned that when the budget was calculated in July of 2025 it was increased by 5%. 1/13/2026 Motion to increase the meter reader wages 2.8%: Jerry
Second: Dennis Passed

New Business:

1/13/2026 ~ Dave reviewed the cost involved with pit installation and the fee schedule. He has adjusted our fee schedule for inflation. We have until 2027 to make our website ADA compatible. Everything has to be scanned so it can be accessed by all.

Bookkeepers Report:

10/8/2025 ~ Arny has been in touch with Clayton and most of the audit will be done electronically. Wendy Weissman has agreed to help Arny with some of the new requirements. 10/22/2025 Audit will start April 2026.

Arny has talked to Cascade County regarding the delinquent balances. We will have this prepared for the 8/26/2025 meeting so we can have this at the Cascade County by 9/1/2025. 8/26/2025 ~ #691 will be turned over to the county. That property is owned by #645. Christy will get a letter out to #645 for \$1,865.00 9/9/2025~ #645 called Arny questioning the bill. He was told that as the property owner, the bill stops with him if his tenant is not paying. Arny told him to attend tonight's meeting and he did not show up. 9/24/2025 ~ Mercy and Dave signed the letter going to the

county tonight. 10/08/2025 ~ Arny needed signatures from all board members. He will submit tomorrow hopefully. 10/22/2025. 11/12/2025 ~ #645 attended the meeting questioning the charge on their taxes. The board will review. 12/10/2025 ~ Homeowners attended and discussed with the board the situation. Homeowner was not aware of the water bill being delinquent since the bill was being mailed the second address. He homeowner has requested that the tap be permanently terminated. Motion was made to remove the request to Cascade County and work with the homeowners to collect the outstanding balance. We will supply a letter to be signed by the homeowners and board stating they will pay \$25.00 until the bill is paid off. 1/13/2026 Homeowners attended tonight's meeting to sign the letter. Arny will contact the county to remove the delinquent charge of \$ 1,865.00

There were 3 accounts that had extremely high-water usage. Brian contacted each person and there was a water leak, a leak under the trailer and one that we are watching. Bills were mailed earlier this week.

12/10/2025~ #525 now has a high usage while he was on vacation. We did install a new meter earlier this year. Special Termination we did receive 2 checks from the homeowner. 1/13/2026 ~ The homeowner was here to discuss his bill. We will do an internal audit based on his questions and concerns.

W2's were either handed out tonight or will be mailed tomorrow.

The following bills were read for approval:

City of Great Falls	\$ 26.00	Water Samples
Utilities Underground Locate	\$ 7.00	4 Locates
Northwest Fence Products	\$ 297.50	Chain Link repair PH #1
KDS Networks	\$ 54.95	Monthly Internet Service
Liffing Machine	\$ 4,524.08	Repair of 2 Crane Dist Pumps
Northwestern Energy	\$ 243.05	Pumphouse # 1
Northwestern Energy	\$ 1,801.98	Pumphouse # 2
Cascade Electric	\$ 2,622.80	Pressure Reducers & Edison Fuses
MT Unemployment Taxes	\$ 83.81	Payroll Taxes
Brian Blackford	\$ 1,152.95	General Mgr/Operator Wage
Kristie Blackford	\$ 138.52	Director's Fee
Arnold Schandelson	\$ 949.06	Bookkeeper's Wage
David Schuler	\$ 108.56	Director's Fee
Royce Shipley	\$ 176.34	Wages, Mileage Misc
Christina M Walter	\$ 362.92	Secretarial Wage
Edward Taylor	\$ 434.04	Wages, Mileage Misc
	\$ 12,983.56	
# 5031 Gerald Ulmen	\$ 138.53	Director's Fee
	\$ 138.53	

Claim from for Arnold Schandelson \$38.99 for printer cartridges.

Motion to Pay the Bills as Read: Jerry
 Second: Dennis Passed

Treasurer's Report: Nothing to report

Operator's Report:

- #667 has a leak at his meter pit. Brian provided him a key so he can work on this over the holiday break. He is turning his water on and off as needed.
- Pumphouse #2 Isolation valve broke. Parts have been ordered.
- Pumphouse #2 check valve was broken and rebuilt. Rebuilt did not take. Valve reassembly will need to be replaced. Brian is looking into replacing check valve with a larger diameter one in the expectation of more longevity.

Upcoming absences:

Dave Feb 9-16 Jerry Feb 12 - March 6

Motion to adjourn at 8:40: Jerry
 Second: Kristie Passed

David Schuler
 President

Christy Walter
 Secretary