

GORE HILL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
406-761-6528
Minutes of the Public Board Meeting
Public Meeting
March 10, 2026

Board Members present: Dennis Peppenger, Dave Schuler, Kristie Blackford, Susan Bersuch
Conducting: Dave Schuler
Recording Secretary: Christy Walter / Ashlee Liedle
Operator: Brian Blackford
Bookkeeper: Arny Schandelson
Guest: Cristan Cochrane
The Public Meeting began at 7:00 pm

Motion to open the meeting: Jerry
Second: Dennis Passed

Motion to accept the minutes of 2/24/2026: Jerry
Second: Dennis Passed

Checks received at meeting: Ck#12461 #502 \$300.00 | Ck#14081 #541 \$70.94

Old Business:

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. 1/27/2026 ~ Dave suggested a flat rate. 2/24/2026 – Discussion about add a flat rate vs percentage. Kristi suggests holding until accounting software is running smoothly. Motion to set a flat \$10.00 late fee to be applied to past due balances on the last day of the month. This will be effective June 1, 2026. This will be included in the March newsletter. This will also be included in monthly statements. Arny requested clarification on deadlines for billing and late fee being applied. 3/10/26 Dave wanted to place mitigating circumstances clause for special circumstances regarding late fees.

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. 1/27/2026 – This will be followed up on 2/24/2026. 2/24/2026 – Dave still working on ADA compliance for the website. Fee schedule inflation updates recommended pit install \$3,000 from \$2,000 other fees will also be increase based on inflation. Dennis recommended updating to cost will be based on estimates at the time of a request. 2/24/2026 – Dennis questions if district should charge customers for requested meter changes. Brian recommended that if change proves defective meter that fee is not applied to customer billing.

2/10/2026 – Need to assign a board member to monitor the email (Gmail). The board assigned ownership of the Gmail inbox to the secretary. Ashlee to create label for board members to easily identify emails that require their attention. CLOSED

2/24/2026 – District Bi-Laws are being updated to be ADA compliant. This includes the minutes, quarterly files, balance sheets, and financials. Dave requested Profit and Loss sent as a PDF to get documents updated to ADA. 3/10/26 Dave called a special meeting for board members only next Tuesday 3/17/2026.

New Business:

3/10/2026 – Kristi to complete the Quartey newsletter.

3/10/2026 – Jerry requested that we put the generator for sale on Facebook market place, Dave agreed and will post.

3/10/2026 – Received a quote from Black Mountain software to add additional services for accounting to remove QuickBooks. Service would add \$277 monthly. Arny to confirm payroll, and online payments are services included in additional cost.

3/10/2026 – Brian recommended purchase a new distribution pump approx. \$20,000.00 takes 6 months to receive. Motion to purchase:
Jerry
Second: Kristie Passed

Bookkeepers Report:

10/8/2025 ~ Arny has been in touch with Clayton at Wipfli 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. 2/10/2026 Clayton will send Arny information to upload to the portal. 3/10/2026 We received 2025 audit contract for approximately \$40,000.00 Dave signed. Audit starts April 6, 2026.

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. 2/10/2026 homeowner does not want to pay any past due balances until internal audit is completed. Arny completed internal audit and notification will be sent to homeowner regarding the balance. 2/24/2026 – Arny completed a complete audit and did not identify any billing discrepancies. Kristie to complete a second review. 3/10/26 Dave to meet with customer and review with Arny next week.

2/10/2026 - #705 had zero usage meter reading. Brian completed a second reading that was not zero. Meter is scheduled to be changed.

2/10/2026 – #556 requested a name change. Arny to verify reason for change.

3/10/2026 - #706 & #716 saying that there was water usage and he has no tap. He will send in monthly service fees. Meter reading was incorrect. Brian will complete a new reading.

3/10/2026 – Dave asked about the previous reading dates showing Dec. 2025 dates. Also, the annual usage on emailed statements were blank. Arny

3/10/2026 – Kristie questioned billing on #665 Brian reported that customer had multiple leaks that have been repaired. #691 requested name and address updated to account owner. #625 billing to be corrected the reconnect fee to be reviewed and adjusted. Account to be reviewed for accuracy.

3/10/2026 – Previous client # passed and has an amount owed. Arny to contact title company to find family or send to state unclaimed funds.

The following bills were read for approval:

Utilities Underground Locate	\$ 5.34	3 Locates
KDS Networks	\$ 54.95	Monthly Internet Service
Montana Dept of Revenue	\$ 300.00	2026 Membership dues
Northwestern Energy	\$ 1,338.31	Pumphouse #1
Northwestern Energy	\$ 1,844.93	Pumphouse #2
City of Great Falls	\$ 26.00	Water Samples
Brian Blackford	\$ 1,214.07	General Mgr/Operator Wage
Kristie Blackford	\$ 138.53	Director's Fee
Ashlee Liedle	\$ 170.85	Secretarial Wage
Arnold Schandelson	\$ 1,005.53	Bookkeeper's Wage
David Schuler	\$ 108.53	Director's Fee
Edward Taylor	\$ 272.70	Meter Reader
Christina M Walter	\$ 379.84	Secretarial Wage
Wendy Weissman CPA	\$ 165.18	QuickBooks & Payroll
State of MT	\$ 401.00	Feb Payroll tax
US Treasury	\$ 1,439.47	Feb Payroll tax
	\$ 8,865.23	

5036 Gerald Ulmen \$ 138.63 Directors Fee

Check #5033, 5034, 5035 will be reported next week.

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

Delinquents: Payments will be due 3/9/2026, termination will be 3/11/2026. Accounts to be terminated #542, #556, #625, #665, #689

Treasurer's Report: Kristie to connect with black mountain to get access this week. We need to review finance software and decide system that will be used for billing. Kristie reviewed customer accounts and verified errors with Arny.

Operator's Report:

- PH # 1 down due to leak in distribution pump causing the loss of prime and pumping issues. Brian will work with Butch when parts come in. 2/24/2026 Still waiting on parts.
 - New Pump \$20k Board Approved
- #551 Final meter read for move out
- PH#2 Well hour meter is broken, new one ordered.

Motion to adjourn at 8:23: Jerry
Second: Susan Passed

Dave Schuler
President

Ashlee Liedle
Secretary