

DISTRICT DIGEST

BRUNSWICK SEWER DISTRICT *Protecting Maine's Environment*

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM COVID-19

HOW THE BRUNSWICK SEWER DISTRICT IS COPING WITH THE PANDEMIC

The following is a condensed version of the article written by the District's Assistant General Manager, Robert A Pontau Jr for the Maine Water Environment Association's newsletter. For the full article, see page 13 of the newsletter at MEWEA.org or follow this address https://www.meweа.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MEWEA_MAY_2020_NL_FINAL-WEB.pdf.

I can still remember it clear as day. March 5, 2020. I was preparing to leave for a tradeshow the following week. I walk over to the treatment plant to check in on them one last time. Our plant supervisor, Jen, asks me “Do we have a pandemic response plan for dealing with the coronavirus?” My response was simple. I replied to her “We should stock up on limes.” Little did I know...

The District has been adjusting to what has become our new normal. Although we are “essential” workers, we have taken the approach that we should be part of the solution and not the problem. Those who can work from home do. We are operating on the expectation that staff will do what is necessary to ensure our operations run smoothly and the District will continue to meet its mission to protect the health and environment of the communities we serve

through wastewater collection and treatment in an environmentally responsible, efficient, and reliable manner.

So, what have I learned from this situation?

- 1. We can do this!** We are here for each other. Everyone is in this situation together, and together we will get out of it. It will take time, but we will persevere.
- 2. Prepare every day.** Although we knew about the virus for many months, once it hit us, the impact was widespread and swift. There was little time to react. Having good standard operating and maintenance procedures can make all the difference. Do not let the inventories run low. We are no longer high school kids cruising the town with a few singles in our pockets buying enough gas to just barely make it home. Keep the tanks full. Total cost is based on consumption, not inventory.

- 3. Invest in technology.** The District pays for all our operators’ cell phones. When the pandemic hit, we were ready to go. Anyone can be reached anytime. Through email, calls, texts, messenger, and conference calls. The money you

invest in technology today will save you thousands in efficiency improvements over the long run. Thousands.

4. Embrace the new normal. Seriously, not all the changes are bad. Let us be cleaner and healthier.

5. We can do this! Yes, you can work from home. For many of us, physical presence is not related to work output. Time clocks do not measure work output. Find what works for you and do not judge others about what works for them.

I believe we should take the good from the past and combine it with what we have learned from the pandemic to develop a new normal. A normal that is clean and safe, yet fun and desirable. A normal where work output soars, yet there is more personal time and enjoyment. The world has changed. I have changed. The District has changed. Rather than rush back to the way things were, I am going to use this opportunity, this gift, to make improvements both personally and professionally. I will not be returning to normal. Of course, I never was “normal” to begin with.



SUMMER HELPERS

Every summer the District brings in helpers to lessen the seasonal workload, but also provide an opportunity to train the next generation and expose young professionals to our industry. For 2020, we planned to hire two summer helpers. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March, we had to adjust our plans, keeping both budget and workload in mind. Fortunately, we were able to bring them in on a reduced schedule. Both have proven to be valuable assets and hard workers. Meet Nathan Abbott, a Junior and Piper Williams, a Sophomore, both at Freeport High School.

What is your favorite sports team? Least Favorite?

Piper: *New England Patriots, New York Yankees*

Nathan: *Red Sox, Astros*

Brady or Belichick?

Piper: *Belichick*

Nathan: *Belichick because Brady left*

Favorite Food?

Piper: *Cheeseburgers*

Nathan: *Burgers*

Do you enjoy working at BSD? What is one interesting thing you have learned this summer?

Piper: *Yes. The plant uses purple fire hydrants to signal that the water it holds is "plant water" and not clean, drinking water.*

Nathan: *I enjoy working at BSD and have learned how to operate a zero-turn mower.*

What is one interesting fact about you?

Piper: *I like to downhill ski.*

Nathan: *Mountain biking is one of my favorite things to do.*



Nathan Abbott

Piper Williams

REMINDERS

2020 OUTSIDE WATERING ADJUSTMENTS/CREDITS & AMENDMENTS EFFECTIVE 1/1/20

Do you do substantial watering of a lawn or garden? Do you have a pool or hot tub to fill? You may be eligible for an outside watering credit. **TO REQUEST THIS ADJUSTMENT, PLEASE E-MAIL info@brunswicksewer.org or CALL 729-0148** to be placed on the list for the entire 2020 season. Your e-mail or call to us must be received before bills are processed. The District will NOT process any late notifications.

POLICY AMENDMENTS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

These two amendments require the installation of a sub-meter to receive an adjustment for outside water use. You may view the 'Sewer Use Billing Adjustment Policy' which can be found on our webpage (www.brunswicksewer.org) under the 'POLICY' tab.

New Construction/Connections:

All new residential and commercial connections to the public sewer system who wish to receive a billing adjustment for water not entering the public sewer **MUST use a sub-meter** per the requirements noted in the 'SUB-METERED use' section.

Property Ownership Transfers: All new owners of public sewer connected residential and commercial properties who wish to receive a billing adjustment for water not entering the public

sewer **MUST use a sub-meter** per the requirements noted in the 'SUB-METERED use' section.

Please contact us should you have questions concerning these policy amendments.

OTHER REMINDERS

When experiencing a sewer system problem, please contact the District **FIRST**. The 24-hour emergency number is **207-729-0148**. Make sure your plumber calls Maine Natural Gas before any tools are placed in your line.

Thinking of doing some yard work? Before your contractor digs, call DIG SAFE (1-888-344-7233). It's free and it's the law.

Sewer bills may be paid by:

- Credit card or by e-check online, with a fee charged. (Fee is 2.75% of transaction amount with a \$1.95 minimum; fee for e-check \$1) Please visit our website www.brunswicksewer.org for instructions.
- Automatic deduction from your checking or savings account (No fee charged). Go to our website and select the "I Want To" tab then "Set Up Direct Payment". Complete the form and mail it to us at 10 Pine Tree Road, Brunswick, ME 04011 to complete the set up.

Please like us on Facebook. Follow us @ brunswicksewer on Twitter and Instagram.

Recognition

The following employees are celebrating an anniversary in the 3rd quarter of 2020:

Ernest Bergeron II
Senior Operator
36 years

Leonard Blanchette
General Manager
33 years

Michael Jouver
Senior Electro-Mechanical Technician
25 years

Gerald Bibber
Collection/Pumping Operator
25 years

Thomas Mason
Chief of Maintenance, Treatment Plant
18 years

Daniel Munsey
Safety Coordinator
13 years

James Sonia
Collection/Pumping Operator
13 years

Lorraine Caron
Finance Manager
11 years

Thank you for your dedicated service to the District!



FUN WASTE WATER FACTS WITH THE SEWER GUY

FACT: In the United States alone there are approximately 800,000 miles of public sewer pipe and 500,000 miles of private sewer pipe. This equals about 52 trips around the Earth.

FACT: All this sanitary wastewater flows to 14,748 wastewater treatment plants which process a combined total of roughly 34 billion gallons of sewage per day!