



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District

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Pay Your Bill 24/7

Online: hpwsd.org

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Billing Office Hours

Mondays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Thursdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month at 1:00 pm in the District Office, 119 E Liberty Rd. All meetings are open to the public.

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is not associated with or governed by the Hartstene Pointe Maintenance Association. Please direct water-sewer service related questions to the District.

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities Re-roofed

The buildings at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) were erected several decades ago. While periodic maintenance and upgrades to these facilities have taken place over the years, it was time to replace roofing and several fascia boards. After requesting bids for the project, the contract was awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Ascend Roofing.

Ascend Roofing completed the roofing projects this past December and adapted to several conditions discovered. As part of the project, existing material was removed to the roof substrate, some plywood and fascia boards were replaced, ice/water membranes were installed on low-sloped roofs, new gutters and downspouts were installed as needed, in addition to other roofing improvements.

The new roofing is warranted with a 40-year guarantee.



Fiscal Years '23 & '24 Audit in Progress

The WA State Auditor's Office (SAO) began its routine biennial accountability audit of the District's previous two fiscal years (2023 & 2024) late last year. SAO chose four focus areas for comprehensive evaluation: ● Accounts payable (disbursements, petty cash and credit cards if applicable) ● Procurement ● Open Public Meetings Compliance ● Financial Condition. The audit has progressed smoothly and is in its concluding stages and an exit conference between SAO's team, a District commissioner and administrative staff is expected in February. Once SAO publishes its audit results, the information will be shared in the following newsletter.

General Manager's Report

Wastewater Projects



"2026 is shaping up to be a record year for wastewater construction nationally. Federal funding is flowing, assets are failing and climate stress is accelerating timelines." **The catch:** Utilities that planned early will move first and those that didn't may pay far more or face public health crises.

Zoom out: Recent failures in Richmond, Atlanta, and Prichard show what happens when planning is deferred: boil-water advisories, flooding, service disruptions—and much higher long-term costs.

Water Daily's take: "The 2026 wastewater surge is already underway. Planning—not panic—is now the differentiator between utilities that build on *their* terms and those forced to react." (*WaterDaily.com*)

As our project progresses, I continue to hear speculation being shared among uninformed residents: this project wasn't necessary, or is being done incorrectly, we haven't communicated with the residents, etc. On the contrary, we have been open in our communications about the project since the Design phase: newsletters, emails, public meetings, public postings and physical mailings were all utilized. We want everyone to be aware of it all. As I read the above-quoted article, I felt it was good to share this as well.

It was not a spur of the moment decision to start this project. There was a lot of discussion and study that went into it well before any decisions were made. I'm glad we started it when we did. We were able to secure a very low interest loan from the Dept. of Ecology, in addition to almost 50% of the cost being covered by grant money, avoiding the pitfalls mentioned in the *WaterDaily.com* article.

We've had a lot of support from residents as this project has progressed and I want to sincerely thank you all for that. For those that disagree or feel we don't communicate, please take the time to go back through the newsletters, postings and pictures on our website (HPWSD.org) to see what you might have missed. As always, my email and phone number are readily available. I am more than happy to take time to talk and share info as time allows.

—Jeff Palmer, General Manager



Drippy the Droplet's Water-Saving Tip:

"Reuse cooking water: saving and reusing cooking water for gardening or rinsing pots & pans, for example, can be an easy way for you to conserve water, avoiding unnecessary waste."

UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION



District Commissioners & Staff take advantage of multiple forms of media to keep the community informed of ongoing projects, any changes to water & sewer rates, states of emergency and sharing other useful information. If your water-sewer account is populated with outdated contact information, you may be missing out on important information.

Please contact the District office if you have more up-to-date phone number(s), email address(es) and/or a current mailing address, so that you don't miss out on receiving communications from the District.

Administrative Staff Duties

In citing WA Association of Sewer & Water Districts (WASWD), many [utility] districts find they have limited administrative staff, often a single person responsible for records compliance in addition to billing, board support, and customer service. In order to maintain both transparency and operational efficiency, Districts must address this type of position with flexibility. Factors that impact this position at our District include:

1. Frequent interruptions to fulfill 'small' requests first can delay complex, ongoing disclosures and reduce overall efficiency.
2. A one-day turnaround standard is unrealistic for districts with minimal...public-records officers.

The *District's Project & Accounts Manager*, Joe, juggles a vast variety of administrative tasks, in addition to utilizing his certifications to support key components of operations when needed. He generates the monthly newsletters, soliciting input from the GM and commissioners to supplement his own articles before tackling the final editing and graphic support. Facilitating accounts payable & receivable, managing water-sewer accounts billing, providing administrative support to commissioners' meetings, fulfillment of escrow processes, information technology management and website programming are also part of his regular, daily routines. Joe also assists in water & sewer system component programming and accomplishes other miscellaneous tasks, such as recently re-keying all District facility entrances and padlocks to a more secure system, providing better protection to the District's infrastructure.

It is common for employees of small utilities to bring unique combinations of skills to the table, wearing many hats to perform a variety of tasks that would otherwise be distributed across multiple positions. HPWSD is fortunate to have a team of employees, commissioners and volunteers who are passionate about using their experiences and talents to keep District operations running smoothly, while also identifying and moving forward with improvements.