

# FREEPORT SEWER DISTRICT UPDATE

FALL 2024



## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chairman of the Freeport Sewer District, I'm extremely proud that many years of planning and determination is delivering big-time results on behalf of our customers and the town of Freeport. Like Town Councilor John Egan said before the town's Project Review Board, *"It is always remarkable to see a public planning unit plan for the future and then go ahead and execute on that plan and secure the funding so the plan can continue long into the future...not just ten years, twenty years."*

The town has changed tremendously since I graduated from Freeport High School in 1978—46 years ago! With growth anticipated to continue well into the future, the work FSD is undertaking over the next few years will enable the District to meet the needs of the community in a more environmentally and fiscally responsible way for decades to come.

Sincerely,

*Michael Ashby*  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

## Planning for the Future

### FREEPORT SEWER DISTRICT AWARDED \$20.1 MILLION FOR UPGRADING FACILITIES

The Freeport Sewer District (FSD) has been awarded a \$20.1 million loan and grant from USDA Rural Development to upgrade its outdated wastewater treatment infrastructure. Modernizing wastewater treatment facilities is an expensive endeavor, and many, if not most, of Maine's wastewater facilities are struggling—or unable—to obtain the funding necessary to maintain their aging and deteriorating facilities and collection systems.

Freeport's Board of Trustees has a strong history of proactively identifying and prioritizing funding options to minimize costs to customers. This forward-thinking approach resulted in the District's recent success in securing funding in the amount of a:

- \$7.5 million grant
- \$12.6 million low interest rate (2.25%) 40-year loan.

While the loan will require an annual increase of nearly half a million dollars to FSD's annual operating budget, addressing these infrastructure needs now will help avoid significantly higher future costs as equipment and construction prices continue to rise, and will reduce the risk of crisis situations.

FSD has engaged Woodard & Curran to provide engineering services for the design of the upgrades.

Together, we're making a positive impact for all residents 💧✨

### Upgrades Are Part of Leland Arris' Legacy

As many are aware, Freeport's long-time General Manager Leland "Lee" Arris passed away suddenly in November 2023. A tireless advocate for FSD, Lee was a driving force behind the efforts to modernize the District's wastewater system and upgrade it for the future. These upgrades are part of Lee's legacy of clean water to the town he grew up in, lived in, and loved.

### FREEPORT SEWER DISTRICT TRUSTEES

Michael Ashby, Chair  
Chad Coffin, Vice-Chair  
Tom Hudak, Treasurer  
Kathryn "Kap" Wallingford, Clerk  
Tim Whitacre  
Lance Myrick  
Adam Morse

# KEY UPGRADE COMPONENTS

## Phase 1:

### New Laboratory and Administration Building

As part of the first phase, FSD is constructing a new building that will:

- Provide a safer and more efficient working environment for employees.
- Separate wastewater processes from administrative functions to better secure infrastructure and serve the general public.
- Meet the current and future laboratory and administrative needs of FSD.

## Phase 2:

### Treatment Process and Facilities Improvements

One major component of the upgrade is the transition from chemical treatment to ultraviolet (UV) lights for disinfection. This will eliminate the discharge of a significant amount of chlorine and other chemicals into the river, a huge win for Freeport's marine environment and the District's customers.

Other improvements during this phase include:

- A new building with tanks to store solids and associated dewatering equipment.
- Updating the headworks, control building, septage receiving, treatment units, HVAC and electrical systems.

## Phase 3:

### Pump Station Upgrades

During this phase we will be standardizing components of many of our 13 pump stations which move wastewater from various parts of town to our plant for treatment. Upgrades will make the stations easier to operate and maintain, as well as more accessible. Additionally, the installation of larger wet wells will support the town's anticipated growth.



Sara Randall

## MEET THE MANAGER

*I'm excited for the opportunity to serve the Freeport Sewer District as General Manager. Originally from Freeport, I most recently served as the Associate Director at a world-class applied marine research organization in Washington county.*

*I've been passionate about environmental issues and water quality my entire life and have an appreciation for the marine environment and Freeport's sense of community.*

*While I'm confident that my prior professional experiences will help FSD navigate an increasingly challenging future, I am also excited to learn from the amazing team of employees here so that we can continue making improvements that benefit our community and customers.*

**Sara Randall**  
General Manager, Freeport Sewer District

### Freeport Sewer District Staff Team

Former Manager of the Brunswick Sewer District, Leonard Blanchette, will be overseeing the construction of FSD's upcoming infrastructure upgrades. Len successfully managed similar projects in Brunswick and brings decades of wastewater utility management experience to Freeport.

Sara and Len work alongside Superintendent Jon McCabe and FSD's exceptional employees. Feel free to contact Sara and Len at 865-3540 or [srandall@freeportsewer.org](mailto:srandall@freeportsewer.org) and [lblanchette@freeportsewer.org](mailto:lblanchette@freeportsewer.org).

Left: FSD operators Mike Flynn and Dan Connolly.

## Why Are Sewer Rates Going Up?

The costs of materials required for wastewater treatment have increased at a rate higher than general consumer inflation. Supply chain disruptions continue to impact availability, and limited vendor options — often just one or two suppliers — have reduced flexibility in acquiring necessary equipment and supplies. Workforce shortages have further strained resources. All these factors are making day-to-day operations more costly.

Biosolids handling expenses have more than doubled, and chemical costs have also risen, contributing significantly to increased operating expenses. These factors combined have unfortunately made rate increases necessary to ensure we maintain the quality and safety of our wastewater collection and treatment services.