



# RUMFORD-MEXICO SEWERAGE DISTRICT

## SUPERINTENDENT'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

### To the Honorable Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees:

I am pleased to submit the annual report of the Rumford-Mexico Sewerage District for 2024.

#### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:**

**Board:** Rebecca Ulmer has indicated she will not be renewing her seat in July of 2025.

**Staff:** Kevin Prevost achieved Grade VB Wastewater operator certification, Matthew Desroches obtained Grade IVB Wastewater operator certification and was promoted to assistant superintendent and Aaron Young was hired to replace Matthew's position on the crew. Aaron passed his Grade IIB Wastewater operator certification in December.

#### **DISTRICT FINANCES:**

The flood of December 2023 caused damage to the sewer line attached under the sidewalk of the Morse Bridge with new leaks developing throughout the first half of 2024. RMSD was forced to have the pipe relined in July at an unbudgeted expense exceeding \$120,000.00.

As a result of a fuel pump failure in December 2023 at the Rumford Point Treatment plant, the State Fire Marshall's office inspected all the Districts above ground fuel storage tanks and required the District to replace or abandon 4 tanks. One of the tanks was eliminated with the prescheduled replacement of the emergency generator at the Rumford Point plant. Another tank, the loader fuel tank in the dozer garage, was eliminated by establishing an account with the Dead River fuel facility located across the street from the District. Two remaining fuel tanks associated with the Falls Hill emergency generator and the Main Plant emergency generator were required to be replaced within an allocated time at an unbudgeted cost of \$22,500.00 to meet code requirements. The State Fire Marshall's office was aware the District had purchased a replacement emergency generator with a self-contained fuel tank for the main plant, but because the install date exceeded one year the State Fire Marshall's office refused to grandfather the existing tank for that time frame. The new fuel tank will be removed and placed for sale once the new generator is installed.

In January 2024, a public hearing was held to set rates for fiscal years 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027 with the understanding future public hearings might be necessary to adjust rates for unforeseen expenses. As a result of the public hearing, the Board approved the operating budgets for 2024 (21%), 2025 (21%), 2026 (17%), and 2027 (4%) as published. The \$1.3 MM/year estimated debt service now forecast to begin in 2028 warranted those increases to ensure monies are escrowed to cover the first two payments required the first year. Keep in mind these are estimates based on current interest rates and project cost estimates and can change based on market fluctuations and actual equipment costs.

The District discovered in December 2024 landfill costs at the Juniper Ridge landfill will increase in 2025 due to expiring legislation (LD715) and new landfill disposal regulations (LD 1639) scheduled to go into effect July 2025. The State of New Hampshire declared in December 2024 they will no longer accept municipal biosolids from out of state impacting our cost of doing business. Landfilling costs will increase from \$110 to \$170/ton in January 2025, and then again to \$200/ton in July 2025. The higher unexpected sludge disposal costs will impact the 2025 and 2026 budgets.

RMSD applied for disaster relief funding in the amount of \$120K for damages caused by the May 1, 2023, rain event and was informed in early 2024 all but \$18K was disqualified because of a lack of maintenance on the collection system prior to the event.

The Board authorized receipts for septic or other services be applied to the sinking fund to build reserves of more than \$1 million dollars to cover future debt services. In 2024, \$117K of the sinking fund was approved for use to purchase a sewer camera to meet the requirements of the District's required Fiscal Sustainability Plan (FSP.) Operation and Maintenance sinking funds include the following accounts: Mobile equipment, VAC/SICK, Bangor MM repairs/maintenance, Bangor CD building & equipment, Nationwide CD – building/equipment and unemployment account.

#### **CAPITAL UPGRADE:**

RMSD is on target with funding initiatives and progress in the upgrade of the 228 River Road facility and the Dix Avenue pump station. Design engineering was completed with the project going out to bid in December 2024. Bid awarding will occur in February 2025 and will identify the final cost of the project except for change orders. The District will also see the beginning of construction related to the capital upgrade beginning in early summer 2025.



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### **OPERATIONS:**

The Treatment Plant experienced thirty-four (34) permit violations in 2024 with most related to BOD/TSS violations caused by the flood event that washed out our activated sludge system which occurred in December 2023 with six (6) related to the Morse Bridge sewer pipe damage. Procedures to control activated sludge parameters during seasonal changes were implemented because of the violations.

The District continues to experience high Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) flow from the Town of Rumford during rain and snow-melt events. The District identified a manhole in the Hosmer Field complex that was damaged during the flooding and repairs were made.

The Nine Dragons sanitary sewer collection system discharge pH was observed to be trending up in the last 4 months of 2024. Appropriate mill personnel were contacted, and an investigation was begun in late December 2024 to identify the cause. The pH problem did not cause any permit issues with the District and is expected to be resolved soon according to mill personnel.

In Conclusion, 2025 is expected to be tumultuous as the project construction kicks off and requires the cleaning of the District's in ground operational tanks for rehabilitation and retrofitting. The sudden rise of sludge dewatering costs causes the complicated budgeting process to be more problematic and we probably can expect more severe weather that will have impacts to the facilities as well.

Respectfully submitted this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, in the year 2025,

*Roland Arsenault*

Mr. Roland M. Arsenault,  
Superintendent